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# Mobile Beat™

THE MOBILE ENTERTAINER'S MAGAZINE

ISSUE 128 MAY 2010

WWW.MOBILEBEAT.COM

## ASSOCIATIONS

HELPING DJs REACH HIGHER

## DEAL, OR NO DEAL?

HOW TO HANDLE DISCOUNTS FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

## SHAKEOUT, RATTLE AND ROLL

GAINING FROM INDUSTRY CHANGES

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BUILDING A FIVE-YEAR SUCCESS PLAN

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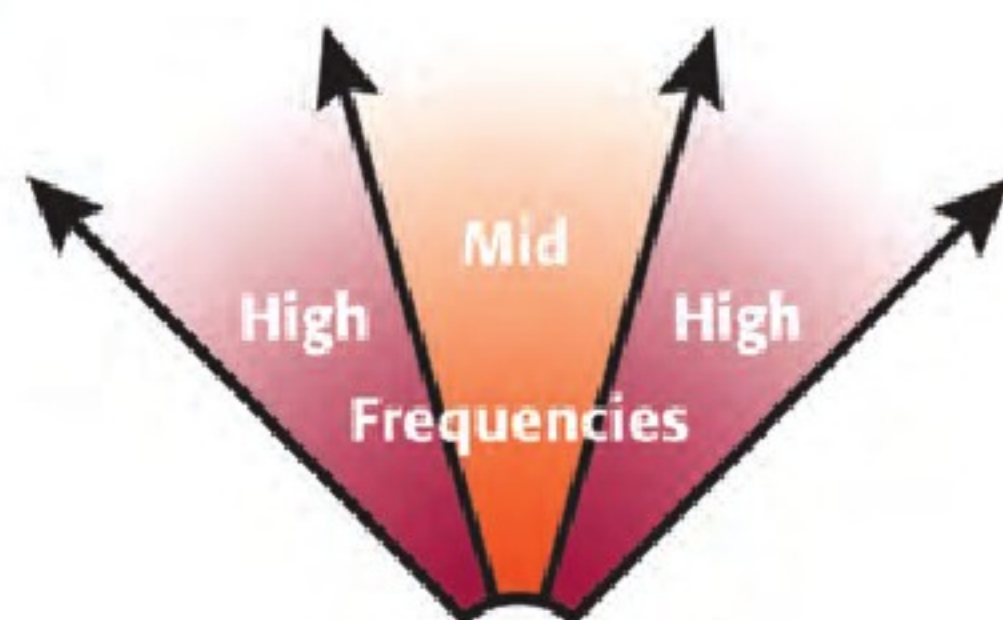
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# We All Need Somebody to Lean On

*Lean on me, when you're not strong  
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Somebody to lean on  
—Bill Withers, "Lean On Me"*

**O**K, now that you have that great song playing in the background of your mental soundtrack (as a child of the eighties, I have the the Club Nouveau reggae-tinged, synth pop version bouncing in my mind), I'd like to say a few words about leaning on others for support.

Yes, DJing is a very individual thing. You are one person in control of the musical vibe of a celebration. You are the host for the evening, singularly responsible for the success of the event. You have a unique personality that is the primary tool of your profession. So, what's all this talk about "getting connected" and joining with a group of other DJs in an association?

Well, many of you are association members, so for you we're preaching to the choir, but for all those who either haven't considered joining together with your counterparts at other companies, or have done so in the past and still have a sour taste in your mouth, please take a look at our cover story on associations. The testimonials included should be enough to show just how much help you can get by being a part of a like-minded group of individuals.

In this issue you'll also find other ways to make connections that benefit your DJ service. Rob Peters offers some ideas for working with non-profit organizations in ways that benefit both entertainer and client. We also touch on the beauty of bartering, to get things done without money changing hands (an extremely relevant idea for today's economy), as well as how to creatively approach the often-dreaded request for a discount from friends or family.

Sticking with the business end of things, Andy Ebon gives advice on revitalizing your enterprise with a five-year plan. And we sit down with a lawyer who knows DJ concerns to get some advice on legal issues you should be aware of.

Always trying to lend you a hand as you build your DJ business, we have some great how-to's from Cheryl Q. on the Quinceañera tradition so important in Hispanic communities, and Jim Weisz on yearly maintenance of your website.

There's a bunch more on great DJs, great new gear, industry VIPs and a slew of other topics, so read on...then share your knowledge with someone who needs it.

*You just call on me brother, when you need a hand  
We all need somebody to lean on  
I just might have a problem that you'll understand  
We all need somebody to lean on*

—Dan Walsh, Editor-In-Chief

# Mobile Beat

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## CHAUVET Puts Spotlight on Aid for Haiti

In the wake of the catastrophic earthquake that left more than 1.2 million homeless in Haiti, CHAUVET®, a company founded by and employing several Haitian Americans, has teamed up with the charity organization Food For The Poor in an effort to raise funds to build homes in the devastated Caribbean nation.

The company's immediate goal is to finance the construction of 20 homes for displaced families. Each home costs an average of just \$2,600 for a family of four. Owners Albert and Berenice Chauvet have kicked off this campaign with a \$10,000 donation and CHAUVET® as a com-



pany has also pledged to match the first \$10,000 in contributions from donors.

Please take a moment to make a difference either in the form of a donation or in helping us spread the word. Visit [www.foodforthe poor.org/chauvet](http://www.foodforthe poor.org/chauvet) for further details.

## Free Pass to MBLVXX Awarded

Out of hundreds of videos posted on Youtube and other video sharing sites in response to a Mobile Beat promotional contest, Jason Earley of London, England took the price of a full program pass to the next main MB event in February 2011. Jason chronicled his travels "across the

pond" and all the things he did while in Las Vegas for the Mobile Beat 2010 DJ Show and Conference. He covered everything from his flight, to a visit to Toby Keith's Bar, dinners, interviews with other DJs, comments about the conference and a veritable travelogue about Las Vegas. Showing clearly how he took in all that the Vegas area had to offer, his video rose above the crowd and won him a free pass.



## ERG Debuts HitList

As part of its ongoing commitment to the DJ industry, ERG Music is proud to announce a new program called HitList, a valuable online music charting service for professional DJs.

HitList is a music intelligence service for the professional DJ, provided FREE of charge to give DJs simple and quick access to find out what are the most-requested, most-played songs. Unregistered users have limited access to both current and gold charts in all popular formats, and the charts are updated regularly to reflect the most

accurate up-to-date song rankings. This information is compiled with the needs of the professional DJ in mind. By becoming a "HitList Insider," DJs can receive access to full HitList charts and the valuable programming tools that are part of this service, including information on the best new music delivered right to their inbox.

Signing up is easy, free, and will keep you up to date automatically on what songs you should be adding to your library and playing for your audiences. Get connected today at:

- [www.ergmusic.com/usa/hitlist.asp](http://www.ergmusic.com/usa/hitlist.asp) for US DJs and
- [www.ergmusic.com/can/hitlist.asp](http://www.ergmusic.com/can/hitlist.asp) for Canadian DJs

## Get Moving to DDR Contest

Konami is running its first-ever DanceDanceRevolution Music & Motion Video Contest. Designed to inspire and challenge both old and new fans to develop their own fitness-based DDR routine, the contest allows users to submit a recorded fitness video and have it posted and promoted on Konami.com for a chance to win a variety of prizes. Participants must create a short fitness video using a song from a list encompassing all of the DDR Hottest Party installments. They will be judged on creativity, skill, originality, and integration of fitness related items.

Since it was first introduced in 2001, DanceDanceRevolution has become known worldwide for its effectiveness as a fitness tool. Each version of the game comes with a user-friendly Workout Mode that allows players to easily manage their personal information and use a calorie counter located on-screen.



To enter, contestants must create a 30 to 60-second video of their best DDR routine, then submit their video link through the Submit Videos link on [www.konami.com/DDRVideoContest](http://www.konami.com/DDRVideoContest). Winners will be awarded prizes for the following categories:

### Best Overall Video:

- Grand Prize: One Year National Access Membership to Bally Total Fitness, one Nintendo Wii console, and a DDR Hottest Party 3 bundle
- 1st Prize: One DDR Hottest Party 3 bundle and one Heart Monitor Watch
- 2nd Prize: One DDR Hottest Party 3 bundle

### Other Categories:

- Most Outrageous Video: One DDR Hottest Party 3 bundle
- Most Humorous Video: One DDR Hottest Party 3 bundle
- Most Creative Video: One DDR Hottest Party 3 bundle
- Most Effective Use of Outside Fitness based items: One DDR Hottest Party 3 bundle

The contest runs May 10 to June 11, 2010. For more information regarding this contest, go to [www.konami.com/DDRVideoContest/](http://www.konami.com/DDRVideoContest/). **MB**



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The Mobile Beat Pioneer DJ Tour will be criss-crossing The United States again this August, bringing a mini DJ trade show to your region. This year we are visiting 18 cities, so don't miss your chance to get a taste of the Mobile Beat DJ Show experience!

How does a magazine go on tour? By bringing the informational content of Mobile Beat Magazine and the Mobile Beat DJ Show to you, presenting seminars in an intimate local setting—in short, by making it easier for more DJs around the country to get the “Mobile Beat experience” without having to go far from home. We're loading up our Pioneer DJ trucked out ride and rolling into 18 cities this August, backed by the awesome assembly of sponsors (on the following page) who have made this tour possible. ¶ The tour serves a number of valuable purposes. One is to create an opportunity for networking and encouragement. Another is to connect DJs with ideas and products that can help them reach a higher level. Each tour stop is designed to give local DJs a taste of the national scene by



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<https://members.mobilebeat.com>  
 Registration is FREE!

providing instruction and personal interaction with acknowledged industry leaders. And once you've caught the tour stop we know we'll see you at the Mobile Beat Las Vegas 2011 Show, MBLVXX, celebrating 20 years of the only magazine specifically for mobile entertainers. So come enjoy the workshops, gear displays, free snacks and drinks (the non-alcohol variety) provided by our industry partners. ¶ All tour stops will feature seminars similar to those at our Las Vegas DJ conferences, including many well-known speakers, along with some new names. Presentations by some of our sponsors will be included, as well

as time for networking with DJs from your area, company reps, and other industry members in attendance. Doors will open at 5:30 PM and each event should wrap up between 9:00 and 10:00 PM. See below for dates and locations. Additionally, look for updates from the road to be posted online right from the tour, as well as a great recap in a fall issue of the magazine. Find more info at MobileBeat.com, and remember, **to get the maximum benefit from the free Mobile Beat event coming to your area, please pre-register online now.**

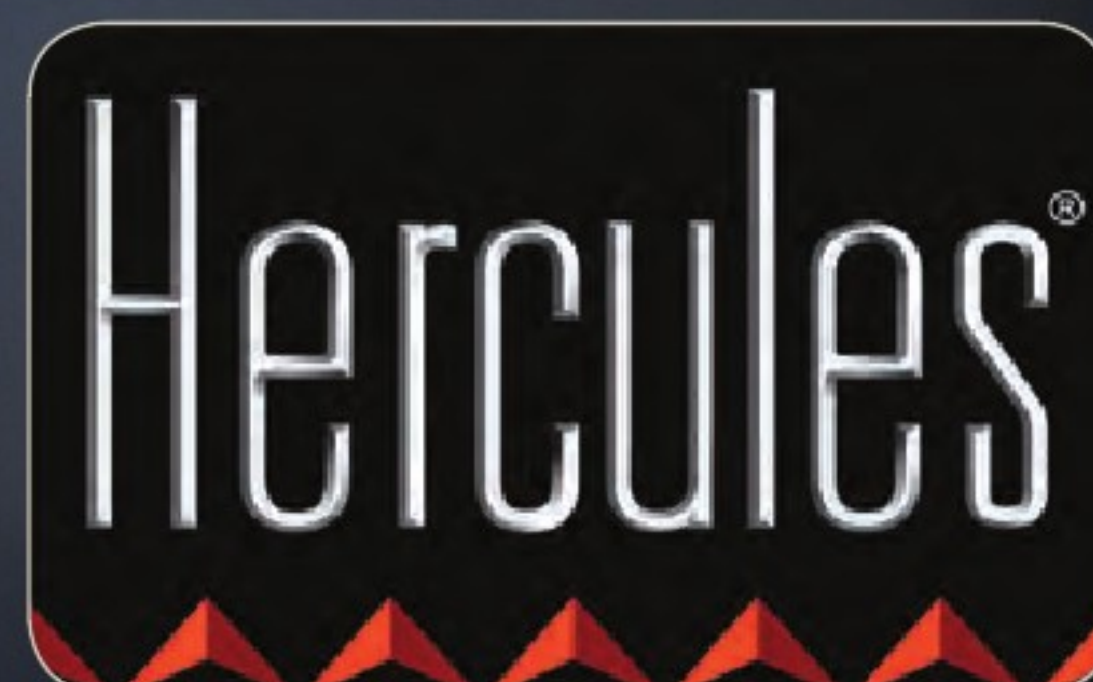
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## LEG ONE

August 1	Detroit, MI	Dave & Busters, Utica MI Hosted by the Detroit Chapter of the ADJA
August 2	Buffalo / Niagara, NY	Crowne Plaza Niagara Falls Hosted by WNYMEA and the CDJA
August 3	Pittsburgh, PA	Dave & Busters, Homestead PA Hosted by the Pittsburgh Chapter of the ADJA
August 4	Edison, NJ	Crowne Plaza Route 27 Hosted by the New Jersey Disc Jockey Network
August 5	Providence / Warwick, RI	Crowne Plaza Warwick Hosted by the Rhode Island Chapter of the ADJA

### CHRIS EVANS: HOW TO DOUBLE YOUR WEDDING BUSINESS IN 12 MONTHS

The perfect opportunity to prepare for the future and start to discover how even in tough economic times it's possible to DOUBLE YOUR WEDDING BUSINESS. Chris is a wedding trade show specialist, sales and marketing coach, and book author. He has helped large numbers of individuals and companies learn how to do great presentations and close the business. He is especially well-versed in any wedding-related business.

### BEN STOWE: TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR LIGHTING! 1

Learn or review the key components of conventional lighting for your DJ packages. You'll learn about four key components of lighting design: up-lighting, dance floor washes, monogram projection and pin spotting. Intelligent lighting is great, but when you see how easy (and cheap) conventional lighting is, you will want to start adding to your shows as soon as you can, and designing custom lighting schemes for different wedding receptions.

### JOHN ROZZ: LONGEVITY (MORE THAN JUST GAMES)

Get motivated by fresh ideas and being UP in a down economy. This seminar will help you experience love and passion for the mobile DJ business. John will touch on the balancing of an entertainer's life, health, and good attitude. He will also include some great icebreaker interactive games!

## LEG TWO

August 8	Washington, DC	Location TBA Hosted by the DC Chapter of the ADJA
August 9	Richmond, VA	Hilton Garden Inn Richmond Airport, Sandston, VA Hosted by the Richmond Chapter of the ADJA
August 10	Raleigh, NC	Raleigh Civic & Convention Center Hosted by the Raleigh/Durham Chapter of the ADJA
August 11	Charlotte, NC	Location TBA Hosted by the Charlotte Chapter of the ADJA

### CHRIS EVANS: HOW TO DOUBLE YOUR WEDDING BUSINESS IN 12 MONTHS

See info above.

### BEN STOWE: TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR LIGHTING! 2

Learn how to do more with less by using

DMX to control your fixtures. Modern advancements on this tried and true technology allow for seamless integration of lighting with audio and video.

### JASON WELDON: SOLUTIONS!

This seminar will give you a simple way to

look at systems that you may or may not be running in your daily business activities. We will focus in on three: Phone, Follow up and Marketing. You will be able to see how having simple policies for these three things will help make your life much easier and your business much more successful.



## LEG THREE

August 16	St. Louis, MO	Columns Banquet Center Hosted by the St. Louis Chapter of the ADJA
August 17	Wichita, KS	Corporate Caterers Convention Center Hosted by the Wichita Chapter of the ADJA
August 18	Dallas, TX	Dallas Magnolia Hotel Hosted by the Dallas Chapter of the ADJA
August 19	Houston, TX	Chateau Crystale Hosted by the Houston Chapter of the ADJA

### ANDY EBON: BUILDING A FOCUSED SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

Online social media is the latest, dynamic wave of communication, but its opportunities for communication with clients can often be confusing. Just having a blog, being on Facebook, or tweeting, is not enough. It's essential to understand the pros and cons of the leading social media tools and how to use them. But first, it's necessary to set a strategy to serve your business. This presentation will help you

develop a goal-oriented Social Media Strategy and sort out what elements of social media will serve you most effectively.

### BEN STOWE: TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR LIGHTING! 2

See info above.

### DANNY BREWER: ARE YOU WEARING THE RIGHT HAT?

For the Entertainer and DJ world, this seminar focuses on the tasks of running a suc-

cessful entertainment business, covering all the topics needed for a person wanting to run their business more effectively. Running a company with 20 people on staff, keeping it organized and making each event a success can be overwhelming if you don't have a plan in place. In 2008, Danny's company worked over 700 events, experience he will share with you, including a detailed plan that each participant can walk away with to help them get started on the right track.

## LEG FOUR

August 22	San Diego, CA	Culy's Warehouse 335 6th Street Hosted by the San Diego Chapter of the ADJA
August 23	Los Angeles, CA Area	The Mark For Events, Beverly Hills, CA Hosted by the LA Chapter of the ADJA (PADJ)
August 24	San Francisco, CA Area	Hilton Newark/Fremont, Newark, CA Sponsored by the Silicon Valley Chapter of the ADJA
August 25	Sacramento, CA	Doubletree Hotel Sacramento Hosted by the Sacramento Chapter of the ADJA
August 26	Salt Lake City, UT	Lone Peak Indoor Pavillion, Sandy City, UT Hosted by the Salt Lake City Chapter of the ADJA

### CHRIS EVANS: HOW TO DOUBLE YOUR WEDDING BUSINESS IN 12 MONTHS

See info above

### BEN STOWE: TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR LIGHTING! 2

See info above

### JASON SPENCER: BUILDING POWERFUL CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

It is a fact that 80% of all small businesses will fail in the first five years. Within the first ten years, 96% of all small business will close up shop. One of the main reasons these businesses fail is due to poor customer relationships. This innovative

presentation will show you no-nonsense methods that will allow you to attract new customers, motivate and retain your current customers, and even a few tricks to help restore relationships with the lost customer.



# Shakeout, Rattle, and Roll

THE TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGIN':  
HOW TO SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY

BY JOHN STIERNBERG •

**C**hange is in the air for mobile entertainers. Clients are demanding more and wanting to pay less. Vendors (like gear manufacturers) are changing distribution policies and dealer affiliations. The DIY threat (aka the "iPod wedding") looms large. Some of your competitors have gone out of business; others are stronger than ever.

Where is it all headed? What impact will it have on your business? Are there opportunities amidst the challenges? This article takes a look at industry shakeout trends and suggests three action tips for success.

## INDUSTRY LIFE CYCLE: IS IT TIME FOR A SHAKEOUT?

Most industries—including mobile entertainment—have long-term growth cycles followed by softening or decline. For example, real estate enjoyed big growth from 2002 to 2007 but has been in a down cycle since 2008. Of course there are regional variations. We're talking big picture to make a point.

The business swings in mobile entertainment are not as dramatic as those in the automotive or fashion industry. That's because of what I call the "Entertainment Factor." When times are good, people use entertainment to celebrate. When times are bad, people use entertainment to escape and deal with their troubles. There are still plenty of weddings, proms, anniversaries, birthdays, corporate events, and community gatherings that need entertainment and related services.

So why talk about a mobile entertainment industry shakeout? Let's define it. According to Barron's Dictionary of Business Terms, a shakeout is a "change in market conditions that results in the elimination of the weaker or marginally financed participants in an industry." Hmm...did any of your competitors go out of business in the past year? Did they come to you and offer to sell you their gear, go on your payroll, or sell their company outright? Yes, a shakeout is happening, and that's a good thing.

## WHY MOBILE ENTERTAINMENT COMPANIES FADE AWAY

Many DJs report that their business is better than ever. They tend to be the stronger, better-managed companies, whether single

operators or multi-ops with a lot of rigs. What's happening with the others? Here are three common scenarios.

Can't afford to continue. Some don't have enough gigs and can't make a living and pay their bills. They may need to consider merging with or selling to another DJ or entertainment firm, or just go out of business.

Lost interest. Gigs or not, some mobile entertainers get distracted by day jobs, family, and other interests. They may be full-time or part-time. In any case, someone else is going to pick up the slack with clients.

Ready to move on. Many successful DJs are nearing retirement age and looking ahead to the next phase of their lives. Their businesses may be strong, and worth selling to an employee or competitor.

## HOW TO "RATTLE AND ROLL"

Amidst all the change in the industry, you can plan to do more than just survive. There is plenty of work out there and it looks like the consumer economy has (at least) stopped getting worse. That spells opportunity—time to rattle the competition and roll with the coming "up cycle." Here are three suggestions.

**Action Tip 1:** Analyze your own situation. Are you a survivor, or is it time to do something different? How do you feel about the risks involved? Are you properly financed? Get feedback from close advisors and family to help you view the situation objectively.

**Action Tip 2:** Analyze your competitors and their situations. Who's getting the work and why? Are there competitors who meet one of the shakeout scenarios described above? Are they approachable about a possible merger or acquisition?

**Action Tip 3:** Update your business plan. Look back on your mission, vision, values, and brand positioning statement. How do they square with what is happening in your market today? How do your bookings for the rest of the year line up with your financial objectives? Remember, whether you are buying, selling, merging, or just keeping the status quo, you need to have a plan and work it.

## HERE'S THE POINT...

Industry shakeouts are the natural and healthy results of changes in the marketplace. The mobile entertainment industry is changing now and will continue to change. Will you be one of the winners? The critical difference is how you run your business, not the size of your music library or sound system. Remember that the sequence of the Action Tips is important: 1) analyze your own situation, 2) analyze the competition, and 3) update your business plan.

Next issue we'll talk more about branding and adding value for clients. In the meantime, best wishes for continued success in mobile entertainment! **MB**



John Stiernberg is founder of Stiernberg Consulting ([www.stiernberg.com](http://www.stiernberg.com)). His book *Succeeding In Music: Business Chops for Performers and Songwriters* is published by Hal Leonard Books. Contact John via e-mail at [john@stiernberg.com](mailto:john@stiernberg.com). You can find John on LinkedIn, Plaxo, and Facebook and follow him on Twitter.



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# Game Show Do's and Don'ts

VETERAN HOST AND GAME SHOW EXPERT SHARES TIPS

BY ROB JOHNSON •

I have been hosting game shows and trivia parties for over 10 years. Quite a few entertainers call me to “pick my brain” or just discuss game shows as an option for them to add to their entertainment arsenals. Many of them have never hosted one, but quite a few make a good living at it. I often run into people who do it even more than I do, and it is great to pick up some new ideas from them.

This time around, I'll touch on some of the do's and don'ts I have learned over the years. Like all my information, take what you can use and disregard the rest. I am a firm believer that each entertainer must make their show their own, and not try and copy someone else. We all “borrow” ideas from others and there is rarely a brand new concept invented. But we can be creative in the way we make a borrowed idea work with our own style.

## **DO LOOK CAREFULLY AT THE GAME SHOW BUSINESS BEFORE YOU JUMP INTO IT.**

It is quite a bit different than DJing and karaoke. Someone asked me once if anyone can be a game show host. I answered NO. I am sure anyone can “be” a host, but not necessarily do it well or make money at it. But MOST DJs would be able to as they are likely already entertainers and comfortable in front of crowds.

## **DO RESEARCH THE EQUIPMENT THOROUGHLY.**

Look at the different options available. Technology has changed a lot in the last 10 years and prices are considerably more affordable now.

## **DO DECIDE WHAT YOUR MARKET CAN HANDLE.**

Are there 10 companies offering these types of events already, so the market is saturated and people are slashing prices

to get bookings? (Not a unique situation for DJs, unfortunately). When I speak with someone who says they don't know of ANYONE in their market performing these types of events I get excited for them. That is the market I would want. Imagine being FIRST to offer something new and exciting. You could set the bar wherever you want.

## **DO DECIDE WHAT TYPE OF EVENTS YOU WANT TO WORK ON.**

Standard trivia, TV game simulations, homemade concepts, physical challenge based games, or others may be suited to your personality.

## **DO HONESTLY EVALUATE YOUR PERSONALITY AND STYLE.**

Do you have the stage presence to command the audience? Are you quick-witted? In DJing and karaoke even the most interactive entertainers have 2-3 minutes “off” while songs are playing. When hosting game shows and trivia parties you may be constantly interacting with the audience and contestants. It also requires a lot more talking than most are used to, so make sure your voice can handle it.

## **DO CONTACT ME AT DIGIGAMES ANYTIME.**

I would be happy to answer any questions.

## **DON'T JUMP INTO SOMETHING YOU ARE NOT READY FOR.**

I have talked with DJs who purchased game show systems and then were frustrated when clients didn't beat down their doors. It is just like DJing, karaoke, photo booths, and anything else. Simply having equipment will not make you successful. You need to position yourself in your market so that customers will want to hire you.

## **DON'T ASSUME THAT YOU CAN BE A SUCCESSFUL GAME SHOW HOST.**

Talk to others that have done it for a while. You might find out it isn't for you. I know I hear the word “cheesy” thrown around chat boards and conventions a lot. While I disagree totally with the connotation “cheesy” brings, I do agree that you need to know your strengths and your target market.

## **DON'T BOOK SHOWS LONGER THAN 2 HOURS.**

This is just my opinion, but it is based on 10 years of successful game show hosting. Trust me on this. Beyond the two-hour mark your audience isn't going to want to listen to you. I suggest that you leave them wanting more. They can always book you back for another show. If the client wants more entertainment I will gladly add some karaoke or DJing to the event.

## **DON'T PASS UP THE CHANCE TO GET INTO THIS AWESOME BUSINESS.**

If you think you might have fun, I say go for it. I usually have a blast hosting these events and you can too. **MB**



Rob Johnson has hosted trivia parties and game shows for more than a decade. He is the spokesperson for DigiGames and uses their equipment exclusively. He has performed throughout the United States, Europe and the Caribbean. He has also presented his “Midweek Money” seminar at

multiple conferences and conventions including Mobile Beat and ADJA events. If you would like Rob to speak at your event or demonstrate DigiGames gear, contact him at 701-710-1657.



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# Legal Q & A

ANSWERS TO COMMON DJ LEGAL QUESTIONS WITH ATTORNEY COE W. RAMSEY

*(Disclaimer: The following should not be construed as legal advice. For specific legal services related to your business, see your attorney. - Ed.)*

## Does the average DJ service need to incorporate their company?

**Incorporation generally refers to the formation of a corporation (Inc.), limited liability company (LLC), or other business entity.** Corporations and LLCs are very similar and generally offer the same legal benefits. Once incorporated, a business is treated as a legal entity that is considered separate from the individuals who own it. The principal benefit of operating a business as a corporation or LLC is that doing so can protect the owner's personal assets from the liabilities of the business. It is important, however, that owners respect the corporate entity and keep their personal affairs separate and apart from the business's affairs. For example, and at minimum, the business and its owner(s) should have separate bank accounts and accounting statements. And, it should go without saying, that all activities of the business, including contracts and insurance policies, should be conducted and entered into in the business's complete legal name.

Another benefit of incorporating is that doing so can have the effect of helping to protect against others from using the company's business name. However, in addition to incorporating, a DJ service should consider trademarking its name for stronger protection.

In general, LLCs are afforded special tax treatment that results in tax obligations only for the owner(s), instead of both the company and the owner(s) having to pay taxes on the company's earnings and distributions. However, in many cases, small corporations can also avoid double taxation by electing S-corporation status. Accordingly, for most purposes, there is not much difference between an LLC and a corporation.

I strongly advise the average DJ service to incorporate. Like many businesses, there are risks attendant to running DJ services, such as potential automobile accidents associated with the routine hauling of DJ equipment from venue to venue, fire risks resulting

from faulty equipment and venue power supplies, and other risks inherent in being face-to-face with the public on a regular basis. By being incorporated, a DJ service owner can help protect his or her "kid's milk money" by exposing only the assets of the business to such risks and liabilities.

It is important to understand, however, that incorporating does not necessarily protect the owner(s) from all business liabilities. For example, a DJ service owner generally cannot avoid personal liability for copyright infringement by trying to "hide behind" a corporation. And again, a DJ could have personal liability for a business activity if the DJ commingles his or her personal affairs with the business affairs of the company.

Corporations and LLCs are creatures of state law. As such, in most cases a DJ will wish to consider incorporating in the state where his or her business is located. Incorporating is a relatively simple process, and details are typically available on the secretary of state's website. Nonetheless, it is advisable to consult with legal counsel, particularly if the business will involve more than one owner, as the rights and responsibilities of each owner should be addressed in connection with the corporate formation documents.

## What are the keys to building a contract that will stand up in court?

**A DJ service should definitely have a solid contract to use with clients.** Your contract protects both you and your customers, demonstrates your professionalism, and lets your clients know you take your business seriously.

Perhaps the most important thing to have in your contract

is a deposit and payment policy. Provided you are clear about when you require a deposit and final payment, and provided you stick with your policy, it's unlikely you'll ever find yourself in the awkward position of having to bring a collections action against a client.

A deposit policy should (1) make clear that the event is not confirmed until you receive a non-refundable deposit and (2) have a deposit deadline that is sufficiently in advance of the event so that you don't lose the opportunity to re-book if you don't receive the de-





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posit. The non-refundable deposit should be priced at an amount you would be willing live with if the event is cancelled at the last minute and final payment is not made. You may also want to consider including in your payment policy an additional fee in the event the final payment is late.

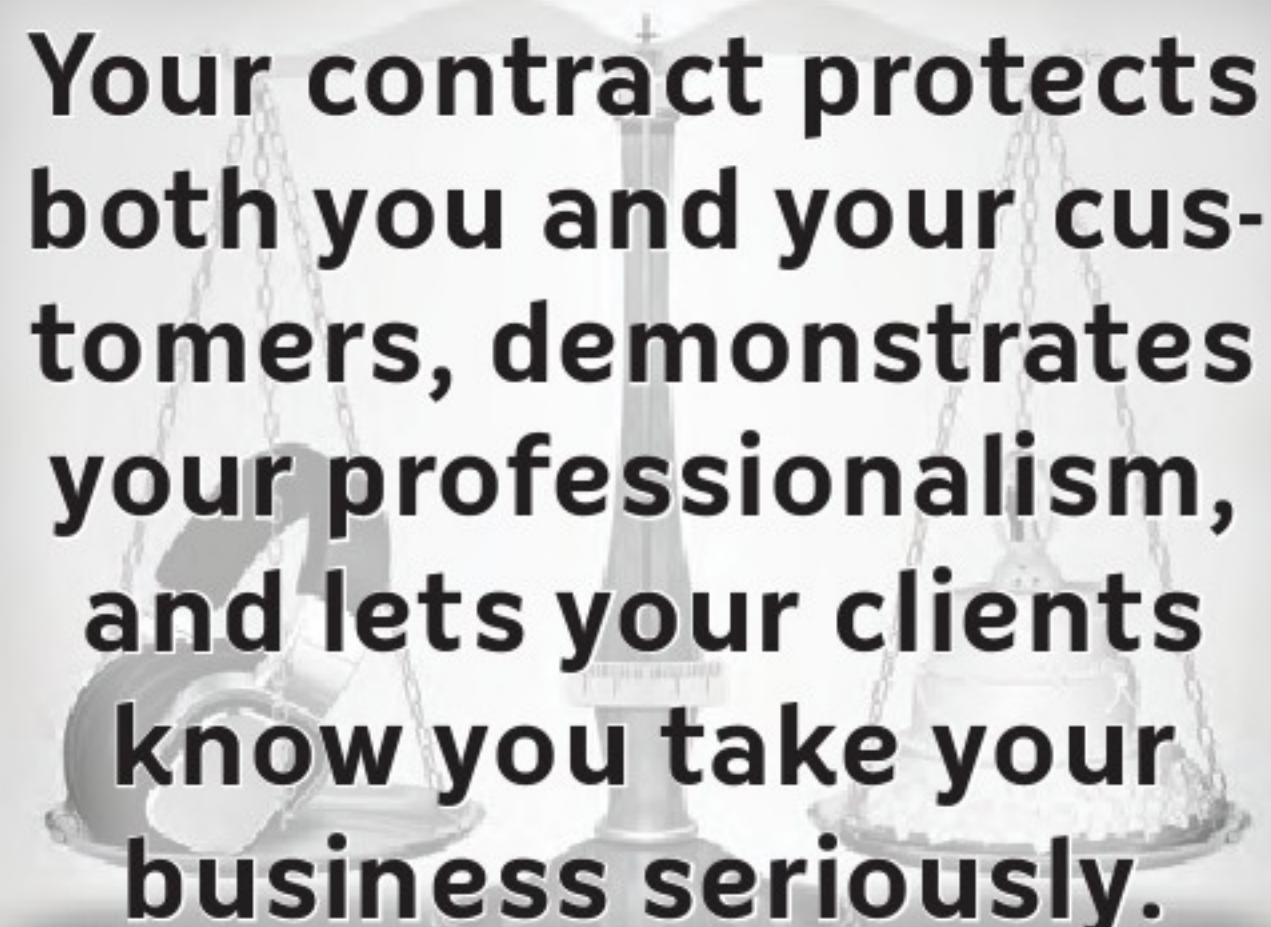
Other provisions to have in a DJ service contract include ones that: (1) make clear that final payment is due even in the event of inclement weather, particularly if the event is outdoors; (2) specify the scope of your services, including the specific times of the event and the "package" of equipment being provided; (3) clearly define the space needed for setup and power supply requirements; (4) specify the periods of time in advance of the event and after the event required for setup and takedown; (5) specify additional labor charges in the event there are unusual venue access issues; (6) require the client or venue to have performance rights licenses from ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC, in the event the DJ service does not have such licenses; and (7) specify that any dispute shall be resolved by the state law and courts where the DJ service is located (which is particularly relevant to weddings and other events when the contracting client may reside in another state).

#### What other essential documents should you have for your business?

**In addition to making sure a DJ service clearly defines its rights and responsibilities with its clients, a DJ service also needs to make sure that its relationships with the people that work for it are also clearly defined.** In particular, the DJ service should understand whether the people working for it are "employees" or "independent contractors." If workers are "employees," the DJ service must withhold income taxes, Social Security and Medicare taxes, pay unemployment taxes, have worker's compensation insurance in some cases, and comply with other employer responsibilities, depending on the applicable state and federal laws. Withholdings and tax payments are not required for independent contractors (though DJ services should issue 1099s to independent contractors).

In general, the more control the DJ service has over its workers, the more likely the workers are "employees." For example, administrative staff workers are likely employees, whereas independent DJs who perform events for a DJ service may be considered independent contractors.

In cases where a DJ service treats a worker as an independent contractor, the DJ service should consider entering into a formal services agreement with the worker that specifies the scope of services to be provided and specifies that the worker is an independent contractor and is responsible for his or her own taxes. While such a contract is not determinative, it can be helpful in establishing that an independent



**Your contract protects both you and your customers, demonstrates your professionalism, and lets your clients know you take your business seriously.**

contractor relationship exists.

Furthermore, and particularly with respect to employees who DJ events for a DJ service, the DJ service may wish to consider using non-compete agreements. In general, non-compete agreements restrict an employee from establishing a competing service or working for a competitor for a period of time after the employee is no longer working for the DJ service. Such agreements can help prevent the unfortunate circumstances of a DJ service investing significant time and energy into training and developing its DJ employees who later go on and compete directly

against the DJ service. In general, non-compete agreements must be "reasonable" in both the duration of the restriction and the geographic scope of the restriction to be enforceable. And, you should be careful when using non-competes with workers you characterize as independent contractors, as the nature of a non-compete agreement could suggest that the worker is actually an employee depending on the circumstances. Non-competes are governed by state law, and you should be sure to consult with an attorney in your state before attempting to use one with your employees. **MB**

#### ABOUT THE ATTORNEY

Coe W. Ramsey is a partner with Brooks, Pierce, McLendon, Humphrey, and Leonard, L.L.P. in Raleigh, NC. He started DJing when he was 15 and continued all the way through law school. "The last time I 'officially' DJ'd," says Coe, "was the weekend after the bar exam—nearly 12 years ago."

Before making the switch to the legal field, Coe worked as mix show DJ on a top radio station, operated a mobile DJ business, worked in nightclubs, and did re-mix and production work.



As an attorney, he has an entertainment, communications, and media law practice, with clients that include DJs, producers, remixers, radio and television stations, internet broadcasters, music services, record companies, music publishers, bands, singers, songwriters, and other artists and music providers.

In addition to staying connected with the DJ industry through his clients, he operates and programs an internet dance music radio station at [www.dancestreams.com](http://www.dancestreams.com).

Coe's blog on legal issues for DJs and others in the music industry can be accessed at [www.djcounsel.com](http://www.djcounsel.com), where you can also find information on my law practice and my law firm.



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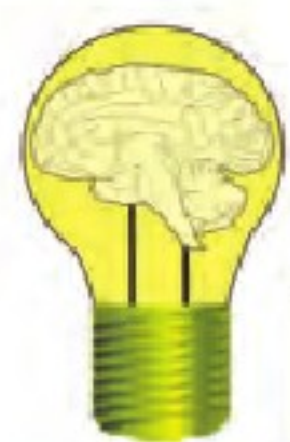
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# Building a Five-Year Plan for Success

FIRST CLEAN HOUSE, THEN FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

BY ANDY EBON •

**Where do you want your business to be in five years? If that simple question is enough to make your head spin, then you must read on.**

Many business owners fall into a mode of letting their business run them, rather than the other way around. One gets distracted by the new shiny object, then, before you know it, you're off on a tangent.

## THE EXAMINED BUSINESS LIFE

Start with yourself, answering these questions:

Am I doing the jobs, within my business, that I enjoy and are the best use of my time? Sales, training, marketing, maintenance, clerical, communications, networking, entertaining, big picture thinking, etc.

If the mix of these jobs is not optimum, what would the right combination look like?

What number of hours am I putting into my business? Is that too much, too little, or about right?

Am I available or unavailable for important life events and celebrations with family or friends? How does this make me feel, honestly?

Am I maintaining my physical and mental well being, or is do I always use business commitments as a standard excuse?

Now, answer these questions about your business:

Do you measure, and know, the gross profit margin on both individual bookings and cumulatively by the month or year? This is defined as the percentage of dollars left, after accounting for job-specific expenses, such as: DJ and staff expense, travel, event-specific music, etc.

Do you know the average marketing investment you make for each event your company performs? Calculate the number dollars allocated/spent, specifically on wedding marketing, divided by the number of weddings performed. That is your actual, per booking wedding marketing investment.

For multi-op companies: Do you know the profitability of your last sound system? For example, if you have 12 sound systems, is the twelfth one truly profitable? How many times is it booked, per year, rather than just in your busiest wedding month or December for company parties? Would you be more efficient with 10 sound systems or maybe eight?

How does quality match your capacity? At what point do you reach a weak link? Do you have the equipment capacity to book 12 events, but only really have quality talent available for eight?

Have you added services that are not really profitable? Uplighting, dancers, slide shows, photo booths, games, quiz shows, props, photography, and videography are some of the latest weapons DJ services have added to their arsenals. Do the math to find out which of these are profitable, and just how profitable they are. When you see the results, it may become clear

that eliminating some of these marginal activities will allow you to focus on your core competencies.

What is your office situation? Are you bursting out of your home office, and ready for an office-warehouse? Conversely, is your office-warehouse too big and costly? Perhaps it's time to "right-size" your office situation?

Answering these questions, and others you develop, is part of a necessary self-assessment. When you figure out where you are, it's usually pretty easy to figure out how you got there.

For example: Did you enthusiastically buy a photo booth three years ago, and never really get behind it? Sell it, cut your losses, and move on. This is a simple example of addition by subtraction.

Now that you've played the Andy Ebon Edition of Clean House by removing the clutter, you can clearly see your current money, lifestyle and business components. Now it's time to look/plan ahead.

## TAKING THE LONG VIEW

There is no one-size-fits-all business plan for all companies. Your five-year targets should take into account what you like and want to do, your personal-business-family balances preferences, the business hats you prefer to where, and what type of bookings suit you and your company. Some choices are straightforward. If you don't like working with 13-year-olds, don't do junior high school dances. If you love kids that age, go after those bookings with a vengeance.

Every business has a personality that reflects the preferences of the business owner. The key is to make specific, conscious choices about how you would like your business to evolve or change radically. Taking deliberate action is highly likely to result in greater overall happiness and financial success.

Schedule a two-day planning retreat with your business partner, your spouse, or significant other, as appropriate. No interruptions! Stay off the phones and the internet. Bring your answers to the initial questions in this article. If you are in a partnership, each of you should answer the questions in writing, in advance, on your own. Are you and your partner sharing similar visions?

By the end of your retreat, the big picture projection should be: What do I want my business and life to look like in five years? How would I describe the company and my lifestyle? What do I/we do next?

In today's world, five years is a long time. You should come out of this with one-year and two-year plans, acknowledging mid-course adjustments along the way.

Start out your future vision with these challenging questions:

Now knowing the profitability of different areas of my business, and how well the various elements, where should I eliminate or expand?

Are there any services that I should be adding, now or in the immediate future? Why or why not?

Is my business right-sized, in terms of staffing, office-ware-



## An overstuffed closet needs to have a ruthless overhaul before adding anything new.

house capacity? For now? For what I envision in growing or trimming, as I move forward?

Is communication optimum? Would training on software, sales, or hardware upgrades improve success?

Is company branding clear? Is the business known for all things it does or just a slice of them? Why?

Do industry peers recognize and respect other people in my company or just me? Is this out of balance? Why?

As I begin to look forward, what elements of my marketing need to be adjusted or overhauled to properly reflect the goals and identity of the company?

What is my financial condition? Cash flow? Credit? Banking relationship? How will this relate to my ability to make desired improvements/changes?

Going forward, the key to one, two and five-year plans and goals is much like cleaning a closet. An overstuffed closet needs to have a ruthless overhaul before adding anything new. You throw out clothes that are out of style, don't fit, or just don't make you feel good when you wear them. Only when that is completed, can the eye and brain clearly envision what comes next. Maybe reorganizing your closet is a good exercise for your brain, before you go on the business retreat.

Commit all these decisions/goals to writing. Follow the project management acronym of SMARTER goals: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Based, which you Evaluate and Reevaluate. The written version of your plans need not be a lengthy document. Only a page or two of specific plans, priorities, and actions.

The outline should be your guiding document for business. Whenever making business decisions, answer the question, "Is this action consistent with the company goals?" When you do this, in a management meeting, or on your own, you are less likely to be distracted by the "new shiny objects" that appear everywhere.

Today, there's an unlimited number of choices. Make your choices, build your plan, act on it, and make adjustments as appropriate...Untold success will follow! **MB**

*Andy Ebon is a writer, author, speaker and business consultant, based in Las Vegas. He operates the Wedding Marketing Network (a division of EBS Virtual Communications), providing full service business coaching and marketing solutions. Andy maintains The Wedding Marketing Blog, ranked in the Top 1% of all blogs. Go to <http://weddingmarketing.net> for more info.*



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# Associations: Helping DJs Reach Higher

THE MANY BENEFITS OF GETTING CONNECTED

BY RYAN BURGER •

I am always surprised when someone tells me they think DJ associations are a waste of time. I understand that they might have had a negative experience at some point, but I think that they often have misplaced expectations. Joining an association is not a quick ticket to more business; it is a commitment that will yield fruit over time. It is not supposed to be a good ole' boys club (if you're involved with one of those, I suggest you move on); it is meant to be a chance for DJs to get together and help each other succeed, using networking events, special speakers of professional interest, and various other methods. DJ associations are not trade unions; but they do provide DJs with benefits like discounted group rates on insurance and other business necessities. Getting "associated" is one of the best ways you can both get and give support as a professional entertainer.

As a single disc jockey service in Central Iowa, we are a popular company that does a very nice business, with clients calling us off of our website, many repeat clients, and more. But as part of something larger, whether in my local area or nationally, we can help improve things for everyone by joining together in a common cause.

At BC Productions we are members of several associations and groups; I'll go through why we are a member of each of them. After my comments, I've included a lot of valuable input from chat board members at Start.MobileBeat.Com. You are sure to see your company reflected at least a little bit in some of what follows. The question you have to answer is, "Can I really make it all alone, or is there truly a benefit to associating with like-minded professional entertainers?" For me, the answer is a clear win-win: I benefit from others' experience and support, and they gain from mine.

## GOING LOCAL

First and foremost, I'm a member of my local church and actively participating in activities there, on average, three days a week. It's an important part of my life, as it is for many of you, but what does that have to do with associations? My perspective is that every organization I am part of has the potential for that win-win scenario. By being active in any group in your local area, from the cub scouts to sponsoring a little league team to your local church, you are getting your name out there and often that of your business. Especially with a church group, you can share with friends about the ups and downs of your business, and get an outsider's point of view on any situations that may be happening, marketing materials or other ideas that you may have. I am able to trust and talk to dozens of members of my church. Plus, they are always looking out for potential business they can send my way. And on the giving back side of things, as the A/V guy I was recently involved with a large construction project and worked on getting a strong A/V system installed so the church can reach more people. Of course there's also the God thing, but I've preached enough already.

Locally I'm also a member of the Grimes Chamber and Economic Development, a group with a goal of bringing more businesses and people to our city. (Grimes is a suburb of Des Moines.) Our membership is bartered against one of the many chamber-sponsored events that we are involved with, such as the annual Easter Egg hunt, Santa's visit at the Community Center and more. And when it comes down to it, if the commitment is only a few hours we will volunteer our service just for the exposure.



This also opens the door for paid business such as local community celebrations where we provide a lot of the audio. It has even led to us putting on a community dance in the main park in town.

## NATIONAL TREASURE

Nationally, I am a member of the American Disc Jockey Association. My friends over at the National Association of Mobile Entertainers also do a great job serving their members and furthering goals of the DJ industry. My involvement in a national association helps to further the cause of getting more respect for mobile DJs in the public eye, and gets me some nice benefits that easily make it worth the membership fee.

My other strong networking opportunity with national reach is what started my whole career in the national DJ industry. Originally the first chat board for DJs at DJChat with Glenn Miller, it morphed into Chat.ProDJ.Com and now Start.MobileBeat.Com. At times I have used this as a great resource for my DJ company. Though my personal focus is more on the magazine and web end of my business now, it's still the place where I can meet up and talk shop with other DJs anytime I want to.

Your experience with any association is only as good as what you put into it. At different times I've been a member of Meeting Planners International, worked on starting a National Association of Catering Executives chapter in Des Moines, been a member of the Jaycees. However, I didn't see the positive impact I had hoped for with these; the problem was the amount of time I had to dedicate to them. If I didn't make the time, the benefits just sat there and didn't come my way. In my opinion, it does no good to join the Better Business Bureau just so you can have a sticker on your window or logo on your website. It's all in your involvement and the effort that you put forth into it.

With apologies to the ghost of JFK, I say, "Ask not what your association can do for you...ask what you can do for your association." As with many other aspects of life, the amount of good you receive from your association membership will be largely based on amount of good you pour into your membership commitment. In the end, it will definitely be worth it.

## Entertainers of the Nation Weigh In on Associations

I am an active member of ADJA, WED Guild, Toastmasters and Disc Jockey America.

The ADJA I have benefitted from in the realm of education and support from members both locally and nationally. The camaraderie and help between members has been financially and personally rewarding for me.

WED Guild has given me a road map for success, has paid off financially with referrals from the website and of course continued networking opportunities yearly at different conventions and in our own online forums.

Toastmasters has given me a platform to grow as a speaker and benefitted my business by giving me an opportunity to develop my extemporaneous speaking and communication skills.

Disc Jockey America has allowed me to network with like-minded disc jockeys and fellow business owners who are out there building and growing their business, facing the same challenges that I face with my own business. The relationships that I have developed as a result of that membership are PRICELESS to me.

All four of these organizations have had a hand as to where I am in my business and as an individual and I owe them a GREAT deal for their contributions.

**Mitch Taylor, Taylored Entertainment**

An association is only as good as our involvement. To join and sit on the sidelines waiting for something great to happen is a defeatist mentality and will never progress your business. I still find it amusing that some people actually believe they can not benefit from joining an organization of like-minded individuals.

The American Disc Jockey Association (ADJA): Joining the ADJA was the first clear indicator this industry is bigger than any one person. Besides growing your business and having the necessary tools, education and camaraderie to do so, the ADJA was the catalyst that laid a foundation for this learning and progression to take place.

Wedding Entertainment Director's Guild (WEDGuild): In 20 years of full-time

dedication to the DJ profession, there is not one single pursuit of organization inclusion that has come close to the benefit derived from becoming a Wedding Entertainment Director with WEDGuild. The education I have received in business management, talent, staging, performance and customer service is off the charts and of the highest caliber offered anywhere in this industry. In less than 3 years my rates have more than doubled, the demand for my services in my market has gone through the roof and my respect among peers has skyrocketed. For me, it was the difference between "shooting hoops" and the NBA.

Weddings of the West (WOW): I often counsel people interested in being wedding DJs on the importance of becoming a member of a local wedding organization. You are probably not going to always agree with the politics of the way a local organization is run. Get past that and put it out of your mind. Join for the networking, education and difference you can make with your customers and these new business contacts. Roll your shirt sleeves up and bring your intellect to the table and let these people see your passion. When this happens, it will open doors you never thought possible.

Too many people who join organizations have unrealistic expectations. They expect instant referrals and business to simply be dropped on their laps. Joining an organization is like running a marathon. You better have stamina and perseverance, and pace yourself so as to achieve a slow and steady progression for your business.

**Larry Williams**

I am a member of the following associations:

American Disc Jockey Association: My affiliation with ADJA is to help those who are trying to legitimize this profession. It also shows my clients that I am a professional DJ and not some fly-by-night "hobbyist." I've heard too many stories of people who will hire a DJ even though they don't have a comfortable feeling with their decision only to regret it in the end. I want my clients to feel comfortable with their decision. I also tell them about the ADJA hot-line should I have some sort of accident on the way to their event. I feel this gives my clients one more reason to feel good about their decision.

National Association of Catering



Executives: I use ADJA's association with NACE to further my networking opportunities through reduced membership dues. We have a very active NACE chapter here in the Memphis, TN area. We have monthly dinner meetings at various venues around the area. It's a great way to meet other event professionals. Along with banquet managers, we have florists, photographers, videographers, coordinators and other DJs as members. We all refer each other and have built a real partnership through networking. We also have speakers at each of our meetings to learn more about what they do.

My local Chamber of Commerce. I have been a member for 8 years. We have a monthly luncheon where we all meet and eat and listen to a guest speaker. This has been a great way to network with corporate clients. I always try to sit with someone new and introduce myself. We usually exchange pleasantries and tell a little about what we do. I always let them speak as much as I do. I try not to hog the conversation. This has really allowed me to get to know my community's business leaders on a first name basis. This has really paid off during the holiday season and in booking corporate events.

I also am involved with the American Liver Foundation. While I don't hold an official position with the organization, I do try to be involved. We have an annual Taste of Desoto fundraiser which is their largest fundraiser of the year. I have been the host/announcer for this event since its inception and I provide the background music as well.

I am proud of all my associations. I feel that I am an active member of my community in more ways than one. It's been very gratifying.

**DJ Wes**

Started out working for very large national companies, felt confined by their systems and again confined by the limited paradigm I carried with me as I went out on my own. Leading your professional life as a lone wolf is at the very least a limiting, unfulfilling experience and at worst a dire danger to your livelihood.

As a founding member and current president of the Chicagoland Chapter of the American Disc Jockey Association, it has been my pleasure to gather monthly in a room full of curious, serious DJs of all kinds and levels of ability.

I've received (and given) more sup-

port, networking and education than I could ever have found elsewhere. For the huge value of the membership I pay a relatively small fee every year. It is a small investment that has returned dividends in knowledge, business relationships and friendships.

**Peter Merkle, Global Heart Ent.**

I am in the process of starting my own organization. The reason I am going ahead with this project is because I feel there is a strong need to network in my area. The national associations can provide discount insurance and a show once in a while, but unless you're part of a local chapter, you're not really networking on a regular basis with other professionals in your area. Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying you shouldn't join a national group, I just find the local groups to be more effective in the whole idea of bringing DJs together.

**Adam Skuba**

I attended my first Mobile Beat DJ Convention back in 2001. It was at this convention where I learned about national associations. I first joined NAME, then joined the ADJA the following year. Recently we started a local ADJA chapter and it continues to grow. I can accredit about \$3000-\$4000 worth of business this year already to networking within our chapter.

Additionally, I have been a member of Toastmasters since 2005.

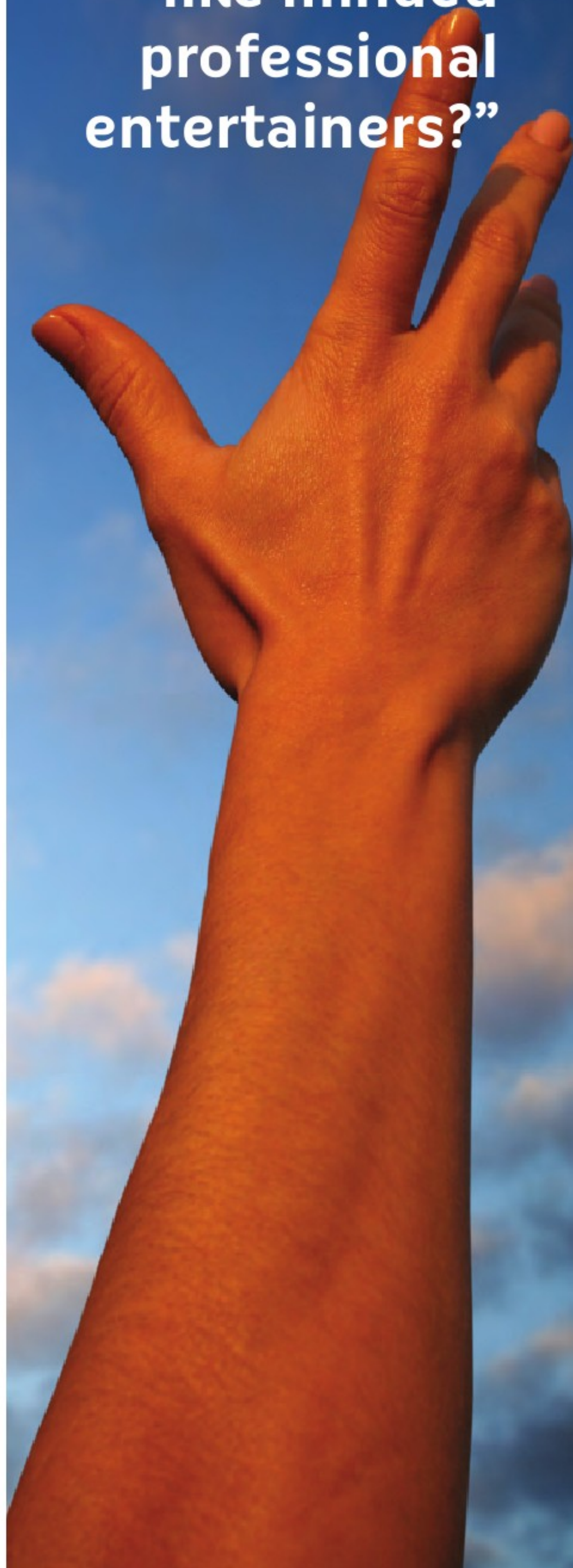
I credit growth of my business to being involved in groups and associations. Locally I attend ABC (Association of Bridal Consultants) meetings as well as a loosely organized local "Wedding Professionals" meeting every other month.

Recently I was asked to speak at another local association meeting, and it was my first presentation in front of a group of more than the 10-15 people in my Toastmasters group or local ADJA chapter.

Being in an association is not about just being a member, but rather building up my network of people who can utilize my services, refer my services, or people I can refer my clients to. I have learned that the most important thing about being in a networking group is not taking, but rather giving. The more I give, it seems the more I get!

**Brian - DJ Busyb MB**

**The question you have to answer is, "Can I really make it all alone, or is there truly a benefit to associating with like-minded professional entertainers?"**





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# In Memoriam: Kemp Harshman

DJS LOSE AN OUTSTANDING ADVOCATE AND DEPENDABLE FRIEND

BY DJ DR. DRAX, PRESIDENT, ADJA •

**It is with great sadness that the ADJA board of directors announced the passing of long-time ADJA member and legal advisor, Kemp Harshman.**

He passed away Sunday, April 11, 2010 from complications due to his recent battle with cancer. Kemp was a cherished friend to all who knew him. A man of principle. A true friend to many. He was very active in his faith. A devoted family member, when his mother took ill four years ago, he moved from Arlington, Virginia to Indianapolis, Indiana to care for his aging mother. He remained there until his passing. Service and devotion knew no bounds with him.

## ASSOCIATION VETERAN, INVOLVED ATTORNEY

Kemp was an ADJA member since the organization's inception. During his 20 years of involvement in the DJ Industry, he offered free legal advice to thousands of DJs regarding contracts, copyrights and contract disputes. He was always found to be helpful and a defender of right. During his life he was involved with many



non-profit organizations. He was passionate about what he believed in.

Kemp received his law degree from the University of Michigan in 1975. He was a member of the Indiana Bar Association and the United States Supreme Court Bar. He also earned a Masters in Public Policy from Michigan, and a Bachelor of Arts degree with a double major in Economics

and Psychology from Indiana University.

As socially concerned attorney, Kemp served as in-house legal counsel for a consulting firm, federal agencies, federally chartered corporations, a public interest law firm, and nonprofit organizations.

His involvement on the federal level included serving as a

staff attorney for three Presidential Inaugural Committees, and as Deputy General Counsel and Executive Officer for the Council on Environmental Quality, an agency in the Executive Office of the President during the Reagan administration. He has also worked in the capacities of executive officer, legal counsel and analyst for organizations including the Reagan-Bush Committee National Headquarters, the Lugar for Senate Committee, the American Management Association, and management consulting firms involved with technology transfer and technical-legal aspects of new product development.

He served from 1986-92 as legal counsel for the Commission on the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution. At the Bicentennial Commission, he worked under Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, who served as its chairman.

## MEDIA ACCESS ADVOCATE

As president of the Clarendon Foundation, he was currently involved as an attorney in the leasing of the educational broadcast spectrum, negotiating leases and contracts, researching regulatory issues, and preparing legal-technical proposals. This non-profit organization has assisted educational institutions in obtaining free instructional television programming and wireless broadband Internet access services. Its current projects include assisting schools and colleges in obtaining instructional television broadcast licenses, broadcasting educational programming on wireless cable systems, organizing a communications cooperative for educational institutions and nonprofit organizations, creating internet-based closed-captioned databases of congressional floor debates and hearings for the public, producing an educational television program for the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum, and rewiring low and moderate income housing for the information highway. Kemp was also project manager of the Center for Economic and Social Justice's (CESJ) "Wireless Cable TV" project, which provides justice-based educational television programming and advanced telecommunications technology to schools and other consumers in remote areas.

Applying his creative thinking to positive media production Kemp actually conceived the "History Channel" concept, which he later sold to Arts and Entertainment (A&E) TV.

Kemp Harshman was always a friend and advocate of the mobile DJ. His passing leaves a tremendous hole in the hearts of everyone who knew him. To honor the memory of Kemp's achievements and dedication to education, the ADJA will be establishing a memorial program in his name. (See the association website at [ADJA.org](http://ADJA.org) for information.) Additionally, memorial contributions may be made to the Ronald Reagan Foundation and Library at [www.ReaganFoundation.org](http://www.ReaganFoundation.org). **MB**



# The Hidden World of Bartering

GUERRILLAS THRIVE IN A TRULY CASHLESS SOCIETY

BY JAY CONRAD LEVINSON •

**I** remember vividly my first experience scuba diving. As soon as I went beneath the surface of the sea, I realized that an entire world existed every day within my own world—and I wasn't at all aware of it. Whether or not I knew of it, that world was still alive and happening.

Almost all small businesses want and need something. Perhaps it's exactly what you offer. And it's practically certain that your small business also wants and needs something—and that other small businesses offer it. Not only that, but they may be very interested in bartering for it with you.

When that happens, you'll be able to get what you need for a fraction of its normal cost since you'll be paying with your own services or goods at their full retail price. Guerrillas learn of this exciting and enormous world of barter by visiting [www.lassobucks.com](http://www.lassobucks.com), a site especially created for small businesses worldwide to barter what they have for what they need. Best of all, membership is free.

Barter enables small-businesses to address a pressing need: cash flow. By empowering businesses to trade their goods or services for the goods or services offered by other businesses, bartering facilitates complex exchanges among multiple businesses.

Any unused time, inventory, or capacity can be transformed into business value. Small businesses around the world are learning to conserve cash, find new customers, and convert their excess time or capacity into the things they need. All it takes is a simple barter.

Since learning of the immense power and economy of bartering, I have personally bartered my own marketing services for a solar heating unit for my pool, a giant-screen TV set, a hot tub, an electric scooter for my wife, a year's supply of coffee, a palm tree, a vacation in Hawaii, a cruise to Russia, and scads of secretarial services. I tell you this only to open your mind to the variety of goods and services avail-

able to those who are willing to trade what they have for what they want and need.

What you may consider to be an overstock of inventory or downtime for your employees can be transformed into exactly what your company needs right now. In the past, such complex barter arrangements were time-consuming and often led to frustration.

But as the online world grows, and small businesses pop up all over the globe, barter has become much simpler, much faster and within the reach of any small business. What you desperately need today, but just cannot afford, may be yours tomorrow—and very easy to afford.

Traditionally, small businesses had to rein in their growth plans because they just plain didn't have the money to fuel their dreams. But guerrillas are rapidly learning that they don't need the money. They already have just what is necessary for them to acquire the goods and services they desire; and all it takes is opening their minds to the concept of barter.

Centuries ago, barter was commonly used by small businesses, but as cash assumed a greater role in the economies of nations, barter seemed to fall by the wayside. Today, that trend has been reversed and barter is assuming a greater role than ever.

Small businesses are realizing that they already have just what it takes to get what they need—and get it in a hurry. It is not complicated. It is not time-consuming. It is not reserved for huge corporations with a lot of clout. The business and marketing plans of an increasing number of small businesses include bartering for resources.

They now comprehend that rather than visiting their banker, they can simply click their mouse and enter a world where they are welcome, a world teeming with valuable offerings that can shift them into hyper-profitability.

If you're a guerrilla, you'll discover this world and become intimate with the benefits it offers to your business. Whether you discover it or not, it will continue to thrive, continue to propel small businesses to their goals, and continue to become an integral part of the world economy. **MB**





# She's So Popular!

COMBINING WEDDING RECEPTION SAVVY AND BEAT-MIXING SKILL, CHARLENE MORTILLO PROVIDES HER AUDIENCES WITH A COMPLETE PARTY PACKAGE



**J**ust from talking to her, you probably would not be able to guess that Charlene Mortillo went to college to become an accountant. Somewhere along the line her course changed, and she ended up as a DJ. Now, instead of crunching numbers for a living, she runs Popular Party DJs a highly successful entertainment company based in central New Jersey.

After getting her feet wet in college radio during the 1980s, she became a local jock at a NY/NJ metropolitan area radio station. She started doing mobile gigs with one of the other DJs there, but Charlene had already caught a vision of how she wanted to run her own entertainment enterprise. Within a year she had opened up Popular Party DJs.

We pick up Charlene's story in the here and now...

**Mobile Beat:** Welcome, Charlene. Tell us a little bit about what makes Popular Party DJs different from the other DJ companies out there.

**Charlene Mortillo:** Well, our uniqueness is that basically I have been married myself at one point, and I find...I can understand the bride's concerns. I can go through the experience with them on a personal level and I can focus on what they want and I can tailor their weddings to what they're looking for. I can help them go through each step of the event, and I can bring together what they want and work with them on a M B:

**M B:** So you've got that female advantage...We male DJs can try to connect with the brides, but we just can't connect as tightly as you can.

**C M:** I think that's pretty much what it boils down to, yes.

**M B:** Besides weddings, what other types of events do you do? Or are weddings where you really try to stay?

**C M:** Yes, pretty much. But I still do the corporate events. Yes, I work on all levels with the coordinators at different companies things like that also. But, yeah, I pretty much focus myself on weddings.

**M B:** What about the other DJs in your company? How do you divide the labor, so to speak?

**C M:** Yes, I have a few DJs. I have a few dancers. But, yes...I do most of the weddings myself. I have three or four DJs that

take care of the corporate events. They also take care of the mitzvahs...So we have a very open group of people that take care of a little bit of everything.

**M B:** I know you are based in central New Jersey, but tell us the area you serve, how far you've traveled.

**C M:** ...We travel to New York, eastern PA, and Connecticut...I've traveled as far as Florida, depending on who and the word of mouth where we go. I go pretty much anywhere.

**M B:** What is your entertainment style like, especially at a wedding reception?

**C M:** Oh, I'm extremely outgoing...extremely upbeat. I find that my parties are more dance-oriented...I dictate my event by the participation level. I don't jump to change the level unless the dance floor changes, and then I have to, of course, change the level of the party. Most people at my parties want to dance. They don't want a DJ that's constantly talking. So I find that I vary it by what goes on, but I like to be high energy all the time. So if things slow down, of course, I have to pull something out of my sleeve to pull the party back up.

...I beat mix. Not a lot of female DJs seem to beat mix. So I find...it's almost like you had Soul Train going on at your [MBLVX] party, and you have men that beat mix...

So I think everybody has their niche. That's what I do...everybody does something different...Of course, I learned from other DJs how to do this, and that's also how I learned to watch the floor. I keep a constant eye on what's happening on the floor, and I determine which way the music goes by what I see.

**M B:** Mentioning beat-mixing reminds me—what kind of equipment do you use?

**C M:** Well, currently I carry Rane and Pioneer mixers. I carry more than one system, because I always carry backup everywhere I go. I use dbx equalizers. I have Pioneer and Denon CD players that I carry all the time. Everything that I carry microphone-wise is Shure. I use JBL Eon and Mackie [powered speakers], Furman [power conditioners], along with Compaq and HP computers.

I carry a mix of everything because you just never know. You have always got to be prepared for whatever...I'm a big believer in back up equipment no matter where I go...[I carry] four computers everywhere I go and four hard drives wherever I go.



**M B:** Four computers? Wow.

**C M:** ...Two are always ready on the table, and two are always sitting in a bag right by my feet.

**M B:** So how do you get your business? I mean, all disc jockeys get word of mouth, but do you do the bridal fairs? How do people find out about Popular Party DJs?

**C M:** Well, of course, the Internet is pretty much the biggie right there...and, of course, as you said, word of mouth... The wedding sites that are out there—there are quite a few of them that I advertise through, anything from WeDJ to whatever. There's a bunch of them out there that I've used over the course of the years, some of them with great return, some of them with not so great returns. But lately it's been just word of mouth that just keeps coming around again and again. And I think it's a wonderful thing, because word of mouth is your best customer.

**M B:** Where do you see things going—for the industry and for Popular Party DJs?

**C M:** I guess what I kind of see that's going to be happening, like I said, is I'm going to be more customer-focused. We'll be splitting the company into two parts...to realign it, so to speak...One's going to be for weddings, bar mitzvahs, and corporate events, which will be Popular Entertainment New Jersey. That's going to be very high-end focused. And Popular Party DJs is going to become the "family" entity, for your sweet 16s, and your anniversaries, and whatever.

I am going to be doing the high-end focus myself [along with a] couple of my other jocks. I mean, taking care of the entire entertainment picture for people. And setting the situation up to make sure that they're happy, with their party planning done from start to finish...making sure we're totally focused on what the customer's needs are.

And then the other side, Popular Party DJs, will be there for the customer who's looking for something that is more mid-range, where they can enjoy themselves and not be

spending the amount of money they'd be spending on a wedding...

And my daughter has now come into play, since she's now at the age where she's playing parties every single weekend for me too. And she can take over that part of the business, which would be great now to become a family-run business...

**M B:** What else can you tell us about yourself and your vision for your business?

**C M:** Well, of course, I'm the one laughing all the time. I am



Charlene Mortillo (L) with daughter Elisa

the one with the little bit off-beat New Jersey sense of humor. I think I'm fun-loving. I'm driven. I always want to have a great time. I'm a stickler for detail. People that know me know that. And I'm determined to have people have a great time at their events...And I want people to understand that DJing is part of you. It's not you, but it's part of you. And I just want DJs to understand that it's not about money. It's about making people happy. And that's pretty much it. You know, it's not a job. It's part of you. **MB**

Find out more about Charlene's company at [www.PopularPartyDJs.com](http://www.PopularPartyDJs.com).



# DJ Ref Makes the Call: Go Green!

THIS DJ MAY WEAR BLACK AND WHITE STRIPES, BUT HIS MOBILE OPERATION IS COMPLETELY GREEN



**S**unny California's DJ Ref Has got a unique spin on going mobile and going green, being one of California's first solar mobile DJs. He can power all of his gear by the rays of the sun. We sat down with this busy DJ to talk about his career, how he has "gone green," and more.

**Mobile Beat:** Tell a little about how you got started as a DJ.

**DJ Ref:** For as long as I can remember, I've been DJing. This started about in '97, and I used to have some old Break-B records, and some Tom Petty, Bob Dylan records and a belt-driven turntable. I started playing with that before I even knew what DJing was. At about 13, I started working at Candy-O in San Francisco and started working with the DJs over at ABB Records. And it really was a natural progression. They kind of put me up to DJing.

And since then, I've really been able to get there as far

as working with a lot of the green companies just to kind of make that transition to being a green DJ. A lot of people nowadays aren't [aware that there are] a lot of alternatives, actually, as far as green. So you know, this is my way of kind of combining music—what I love—and what I need to be doing, kind of my awareness for green.

**MB:** From the pictures of your rig, I see that you basically have a two-panel system...When you get to a gig, how is your situation different from the average DJ, in terms of setup?

**DJ R:** The beauty of having this setup is I'm not necessarily talking to any one location. Meaning, I can go into the mountains of the Indies if I wanted to DJ, because I'm drawing off of solar power. So I'm not tied into any one location. So I think that that really offers me some freedom...that really helps me get any kind of event. If I want to go to an event in a park, where there typically wouldn't be a power source, I'm able to do that without having a noisy generator or anything like that behind me. And also, for every party you do, I also plant a tree. I use LED lights.



...I think using all these things kind of adds up...I mean, I know it's not going to change the world if I just have solar DJing. But at the same time, it's about bringing that awareness and everybody can do their part, and that's what's most important.

**M B:** What kind of events do you do? I mean, do you do the whole gamut of wedding receptions to corporates to schools, or where do you get out?

**DJ R:** Yeah. Actually, it's a little mix of it all. It depends on I guess what's going on for the weekend. Sometimes, since I've been doing green, I've been working with a lot of corporations who are trying to get their message out. I want to be able to kind of team up with them to get out there to colleges and high schools to really help bring about that awareness. But I mean, I do everything from house parties to weddings to divorce parties to—so it really just depends...I'm pretty versatile, I guess you could say.

**M B:** You've obviously hooked up with enough other people to support a business. What part of the state are you in, or do you pretty much cover all of California? Do you travel a lot because of the unique pull that you have?

**DJ R:** Yeah. Absolutely. As you kind of said, yeah. California's definitely one of the main hubs for the solar movement. Obviously, being out here has been very beneficial. But I've done some traveling...just got back from going to Mexico, actually. I was able to do some DJing down there. But yeah. I primarily service California. I travel throughout California. I've gone to Vegas to do shows. But being that it's pretty much in Southern California, where I'm at, it's sunny all the time, doing solar is great out here. So I've definitely been able to get it out there a lot. And a lot of people, because they're getting out there on the awareness as far as the green movement goes, it's made my job a little easier.

**M B:** I'm guessing people hear about you mainly through your website, correct? On WhoIsRef.com, you have a lot of details about what you do. How do people hear about you?

**DJ R:** Yeah. A lot of word of mouth. I mean, I've been DJing for a little over 10 years now. So I mean, a lot of people who know me know what I do, and they know that I have quality work...a lot of people who I know have also seen me DJing at parties...I've had 10,000 people going crazy at a rave, and I've also done retirement parties with 80 or so people. The versatility you have to have for the events is important, but I've been all over the place in that sense.

**M B:** In addition to your panels for the solar stuff and converting the power down, what do you personally work with? What are your tools of choice for doing the events?

**DJ R:** I pretty much run off of the industry standards. I have the Technics 1200. I also have Serato Scratch. I also run off a Mac PowerBook. And depending on the show, sometimes I'll...try to incorporate different elements...

**M B:** You started out working with turntables. Do you still use them as a combination through Serato...a little bit of dig-

ital, a little bit of vinyl? I mean, are you still able to find that much vinyl that you're able to work that side of things?

**DJ R:** Yeah. Actually, surprisingly, I try to incorporate [vinyl and digital], I mean, I have the collection. I started collecting vinyl when I was about 10. You know, some people collect stamps. I collect vinyl. I have about three or four rooms which is just vinyl. So that's just what I used to do. So I have a collection of vinyl. I try and incorporate that in as well as using MP3s and vinyl and Serato to kind of get a mix. Because a lot of people don't incorporate their vinyl. You know, you can find some gems on there that you can't necessarily find on iTunes. So it's good to kind of be able to use both, to have that combination there, just to have something different.

**M B:** How about your future? Where do you see the company going? Are you finding other like minded individuals out there who want to become green DJs? In five years, where do you see yourself with your business and with your life in general?

**DJ R:** Right. Well, in addition to the DJing, I also help to do music. I also produce music for TV, for film. I've worked with BET. I've written for Disney. And we actually just finished up a music score... I really want to get into the production field as well, and really start to grow on that.

But as well as the DJing...we're going to be building something called the League of Green DJs. So we're going to be able to grab DJs from Paris, from Africa, from throughout the world and kind of all combine, all unite them as well. So it's not just me standing for green DJs. We can have advocates all throughout the world kind of spreading the message. So that's also really what I'd like to build on to kind of unite the people... We can change the industry. We can definitely bring about something new here.

**M B:** Is there anything else you want people to know about DJ Ref and the green DJ movement?

**DJ R:** I'm definitely looking into actually talking to one of the solar companies so I can hopefully start supplying DJs with solar set-ups. It's not necessarily the easiest thing to come by. So if there's anybody out there who's interested in getting a setup or anybody who just wants to learn more about it, they can contact me... It's not about making money. It's not about anything like that. It's about awareness.

Actually, just this last weekend, I went to help plant some 30 trees. So I'm definitely up for those types of things, just getting out in the community, that's important to me. So I definitely want to build upon that and really get in touch with the communities. And if there's anybody out there, contact me, and we'll make it happen. **MB**

Go to [www.whoisref.com](http://www.whoisref.com) for more on DJ Ref and solar-powered DJing.





# The Art of the Quinceañera

WITH ITS TRADITIONS, PAGEANTRY AND MUSIC, THE QUINCEAÑERA IS AN IMPORTANT CELEBRATION IN THE HISPANIC CULTURE.

BY CHERYL Q. •

**Q**uinceañera (pronounced keen-see-ahn-yair-ah) traditions have a long history dating back to the Aztec Indians and are very symbolic. The custom celebrates the 15th birthday of a Hispanic girl who is leaving childhood behind and now is assuming the responsibilities of womanhood. It is very religious in nature beginning with a Catholic mass where the Quinceañera reaffirms her faith in God. Family is important in this rite of passage.

## VIPS

Some key people who may be acknowledged during the reception or may be introduced as a part of the entrance are:

- **Abuelos** (ah-boo-ay-lows) – Grandparents
- **Padrinos** (pah-dree-knows) – Godparents, whose spiritual responsibility to the Quinceañera ends.
- **Patrones** (pah-trown-ace) – Sponsors, who are people who contribute to the success of the celebration.

The Quinceaños (“fifteen years” - one of the three terms used to identify the celebration—see if you can find the other two in this article) is a very elaborate event (even more than some weddings), is very expensive to put on (thus the importance of the Patrones), is usually a formal affair, and may revolve around a theme. Since this is such a major event, and involves extensive, wedding-style preparation on the DJ’s end, I typically charge the same as I do for a wedding.

The Quinceañera (also referring to the guest of honor) is dressed in a princess-like ball gown complete with petticoats and hoops. She has an Honor Court consisting of Damas (dah-mas) and Chambelanes (cham-bay-lahn-ace) similar to bridesmaids and groomsmen. Her escort is a Chambelan. While past tradition dictated 14 couples in the Honor

Court (one couple for each year of the Quinceañera’s life), current trends are toward seven couples (one person for each year).

## TRADITIONS

A number of traditions are usually part of the event, including the following.

**Crowning** – This is usually done by the mother and can be done at the church or reception. The crown signifies that the Quinceañera is a princess in the eyes of God. It also signifies the responsibilities she is now assuming. If your client says the crowning will be done at the church, you don’t have to do anything else. If it is going to be done at the reception, then ask who is going to do it, when it will be done and if any special music is required.

**Changing of the Shoes** – It is thought that up until this time, the Quinceañera hasn’t been able to walk in high-heeled shoes. It isn’t unusual for her to wear flats during the religious ceremony. At some point during the reception, her shoes will be changed from flats to high heels. This is done by her father, brother, padrino or other important male figure in the Quinceañera’s life. This signifies leaving behind childhood and entering adulthood. Special music is usually played during this tradition. Your client will let you know if they are going to do the Changing of the Shoes, who will do it, and when.

**Presentation of the Last Doll** – This is the last doll the Quinceañera will ever

receive as a child. There are a number of ways the presentation can be made. There is a dance with the doll that may or may not be done. If the Quinceañera is not going to dance with the doll, I suggest that her grandmother present the doll to her.

**The Dance (El Vals)** – The highlight of the entire celebration is a well-rehearsed and choreographed dance involving the entire Honor Court. This is one of the first things the Quinceañera does as an adult. To be prepared, I strongly suggest that find out who the dance instructor is and go to some of the rehearsals. This is also a great way to cultivate new clients and meet an important vendor who can send business your way. The dance instructor may provide the music for the dance (or dances, if there will be a second special dance). They may also help with the entrance.

In each of these traditions, it’s important to let the guests know what’s going on and why.

## MUSIC

Latin music and how it is used in the event is a regional matter. For example, in Arizona salsa is only something that is eaten, while in Miami it is something that is danced to. Rancheras, Bandas, Boleros, Cumbias, Nortena, and Corridos are some of the styles popular in the western states, while Salsa, Merengue, Reggaeton, Bachata, and Reggae are styles most requested on the east coast. Promo Only



has "Tropical" (East Coast) and "Regional" (West Coast) music collections available, and TM Studios has incorporated both on one disc. Latin Grammy CDs are also a good source for a wide variety of popular music. The DJ Intelligence Top 200 has lists of wedding music that can also be used for entrances and dances with parents. Keep it age-appropriate when helping your client select their music. Interestingly, most of the requests I receive are first by type of music (such as Salsa, Bachata), then by artist, rather than song title.

## RECEPTION

A typical order of events at the reception is as follows:

- Entrance – announcing the Honor Court and Quinceañera (special songs)
- Dance/Crowning//Changing of Shoes (order can be changed) (special songs)
- Specialty Dance (optional) (special songs)
- Father-Daughter Dance (special songs)
- Last Doll Presentation (possibly spe-

cial song)

- Toasts
- Thank You's (usually done by Parents and Quinceañera)
- Cake Cutting (may need "Las Mañanitas," a traditional birthday song)
- Candle Lighting or similar (may need special song)

## IMPRESS YOUR CLIENT AND HELP YOURSELF

When you impress your client, you have the opportunity to earn big bucks. Do whatever you can to help them make the event a success. Sit with them face to face and help them plan the reception. Use the correct terminology—call the Quinceañera's escort a Chambelan and the grandparents Abuelos. Some of the traditions have gotten lost over time, so suggest them and let your client know what they mean. Work with them on the dancing and music suggestions. Go to the dance rehearsals. And lastly, give your client "stuff" such as music selection lists or a handy checklist of items they might need for the day.

## FINDING CLIENTS

As most of the Quinceañeras are Catholic celebrations, call your local Catholic churches and ask about advertising in their bulletins. Go to Mexican restaurants and leave some business cards or fliers. You might ask if they know any Quinceañera dance instructors. If so, call them, as well as your local dance studios. Partner with local photographers who do Quinces. And there are supermarket bulletin boards that are usually free.

Have fun with Quinceañeras, and remember, when you participate in one, you are a significant part of a family milestone that will be remembered for a lifetime. **MB**

*Cheryl Quinlan is a recognized expert on Quinceañeras and has presented seminars on this tradition at Mobile Beat conferences. She sits on the Board of Directors for the American Disc Jockey Association (ADJA) South Florida Chapter. She is also certified as a Computerized Performance System (CPS) Disc Jockey. A trained keyboard artist and vocalist, she has enjoyed a long history in the entertainment and recording industry.*

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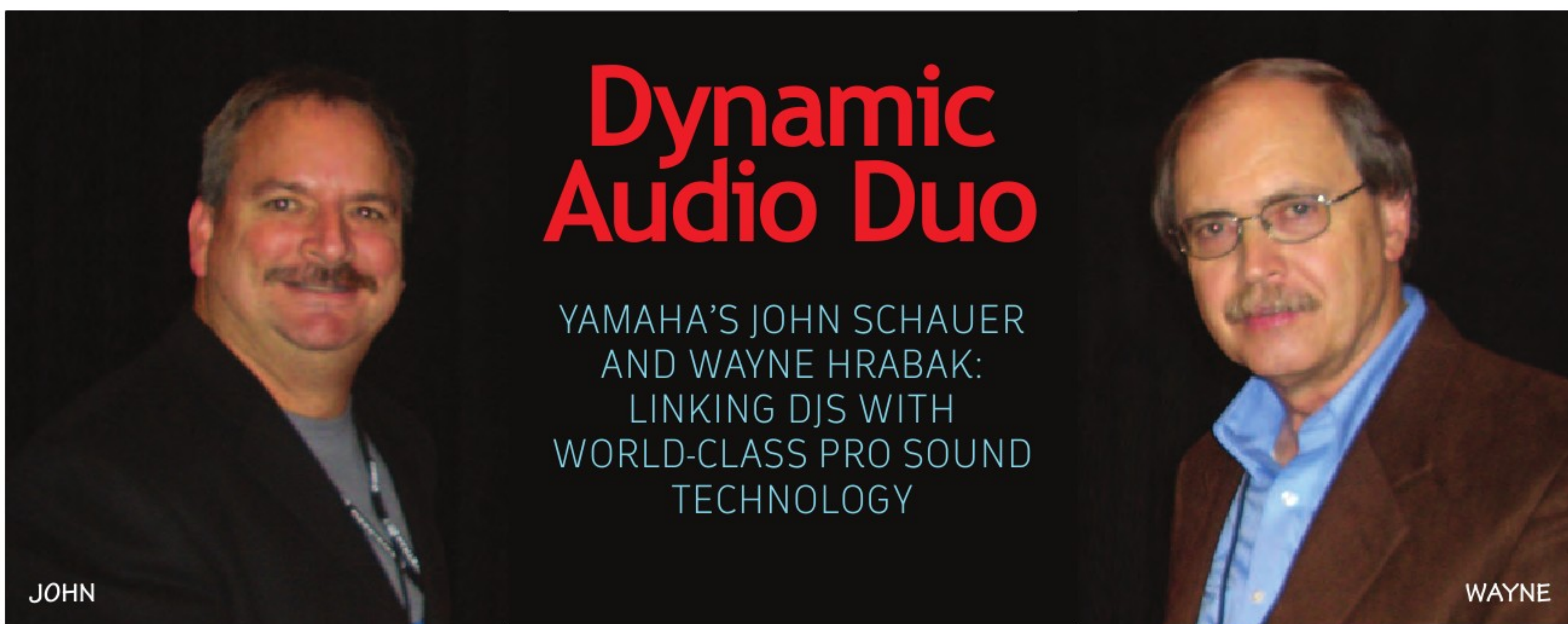


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# Dynamic Audio Duo

YAMAHA'S JOHN SCHAUER  
AND WAYNE HRABAK:  
LINKING DJS WITH  
WORLD-CLASS PRO SOUND  
TECHNOLOGY

JOHN

WAYNE

**A**lthough Yamaha Corporation is one of the largest pro audio companies in the world, just two people are responsible for making the connection between the "mother ship" and the pro DJ world. If you've been to a Mobile Beat Las Vegas show, you've most likely seen or even talked to Wayne Hrabak, Live Sound Marketing Manager and John Schauer, Live Sound Product Manager, as they spent time on the exhibit floor demonstrating new gear and getting feedback on Yamaha products from DJs.

Together, they are responsible for marketing Yamaha's live sound products through the MI channel (musical instrument retailers). John helps the product development team in Japan create products with input from the U.S. Market. These sound veterans provide a unique, insider's perspective on pro audio today, and where it might be headed.

**Mobile Beat:** Tell us a little bit about your products and where you see things going in the future.

**Wayne Hrabak:** Well, probably the biggest change in the market, both on the DJ side and on the MI retail side is the area of loudspeakers. And over the past five years or so there's been tremendous growth in the powered speaker market. So whereas

years ago it was always the passive speaker and a separate power amplifier, as time has rolled along there's been a much larger acceptance and ease of transport and hookup by using powered speakers as opposed to passive and amplifiers separately. So that certainly has been one of the greater changes in the market as we see it.

**John Schauer:** Absolutely. I think we've seen that the cabinets have gotten smaller and lighter, and the output power has gotten higher and higher as we go. But self-powered stuff this year has taken over, absolutely.

**W H:** And then also there's been a transition from wooden boxes to plastic boxes, and that's basically to answer the desire of many people, including lots of DJs we talked to, that are looking for smaller and lighter.

**J S:** And much more powerful.

**W H:** As DJs get older, they don't want to be lugging around large, heavy gear. And I would say that all manufacturers catering to this market sort of have the same or similar goals in mind in terms of achieving their performance parameters as well as the physical characteristics of the products that we deliver.

**M B:** Do you see a lot of the DJs ex-

panding their businesses more into sound reinforcement, or are they just staying in their niche, from your perspective?

**W H:** Those that I've talked to, I think that they have seen more applications for different kinds of PA products. As you know, we penetrated what we call the portable PA system market within the past four years, which is a very small, compact, lightweight, complete system. And up until the time these kinds of products came on the scene, DJs really didn't have something that they could use for ceremonies or for other kinds of applications that didn't require a large system.

I've seen a trend toward having multiple systems of different sizes and characteristics to meet different requirements. And certainly some of them have also gotten into karaoke, in talking with many of them. They have the same kinds of needs in being able to easily carry product around and set it up and take it down quickly without breaking their backs doing it.

**J S:** That's absolutely right. I think that we've seen the DJs themselves branch off; at least the DJs that do wedding receptions and things like that, have seen a need to offer something more. And so they've come up with these smaller systems to use for the ceremony, that sort of thing; or



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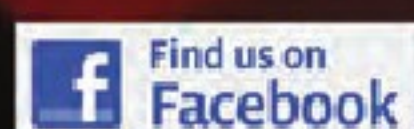
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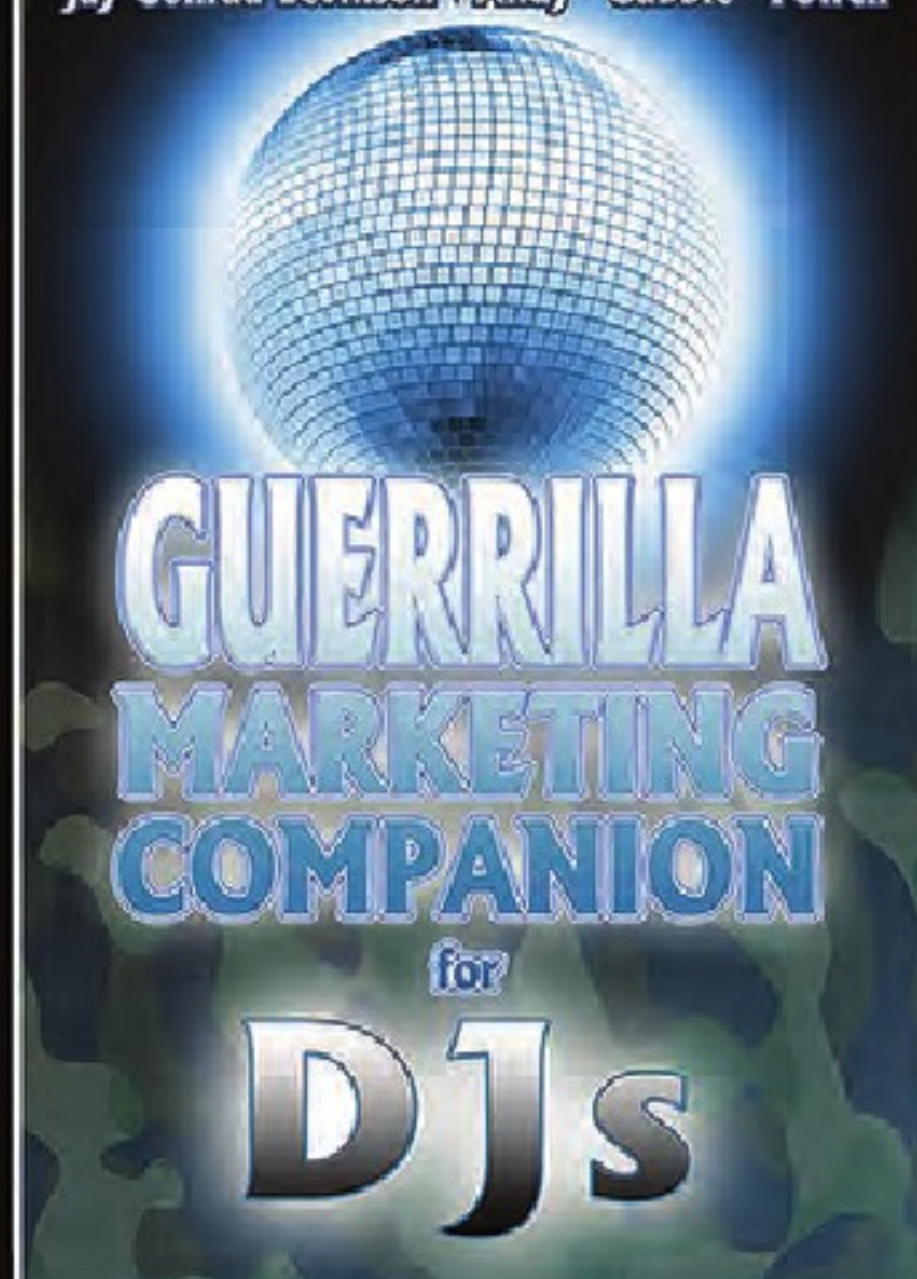
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the little town meeting or the small thing that they may be involved with where they only need speech support with a little bit of music behind it...or some single person playing a piano in the background. That's the sort of thing where this portable sound system has really run through, because they realize that for the cost of the system, with a few rentals they've paid for it.

**MB:** You have a very well-established product line. Is there anything in the pipeline that we should be looking for from Yamaha in the next six months to a year that you can tell us about?

**WH:** I would say so. I think that our goals are always to try to stay on the leading edge of what's happening in each product group. And when a product gets old enough that it maybe isn't quite as leading edge as it once was, then it's certainly time to replace it. And we also monitor what's happening in the market with products that we don't currently have an answer for, and determine if Yamaha Japan is interested and/or willing to

venture into new areas and to expand our market.

But generally speaking I would say we have been extremely successful in the sound reinforcement/live area with what I would call high-value products. And that's what we'll basically continue doing, is introducing products of like kind to both replace the ones we have at some point, and as I said, expand into some areas that we're not currently involved in.

**MB:** Is there anything else that you want people to know about Yamaha, yourselves, etc.?

**JS:** We work hard to try to come up with products that we know the market's been asking for, and we try our best to come up with them at a price point where people can afford to use them; products that will continue to work for them throughout a fairly long life as a rental product or as something that's going out and being used every weekend. We get a lot of compliments on the quality and longevity of our product. **MB**



**W**ireless microphones have become the mainstay for DJs, making it possible to speak from anywhere in the room, eliminating the hassle of dragging cables around, and reducing the likelihood of tripping over them. They also prevent electric shock on outdoor stages in the event of rain. All in all, these days it's hard to imagine gigging without them.

However, what was once a simple operation involving little more than taking it out of the box and turning it on has become more complicated today. Recent changes in Digital TV transition and the elimination of the 700 MHz band for wireless mics makes it more important than ever to understand your wireless mic and how to best use it.

#### NEW CHALLENGES FOR FM

In its simplest form a wireless mic captures the sound that is captured by the microphone and converts it to a form that can be transmitted via radio. The radio signal is recovered by a receiver on the other end, converted back to audio and then plugged into your mixer. For the past 50 years this has been done by analog FM radio but, more recently, digital methods of transmission have been appearing on the market that provide additional freedom from interference. The older analog FM technology has a limited dynamic range, too small for truly high-quality audio, so these units must employ companding (compressing-expanding) noise reduction schemes. Digital systems do not require this step, so their sound tends to be more



Wayne and John demoing Yamaha gear at Mobile Beat Las Vegas 2003





# Wireless Mics in the Digital TV World

BUYING WIRELESS MICS JUST GOT MORE COMPLICATED, BUT DIGITAL MIC TECHNOLOGY PROMISES TO EASE THE PROCESS ONCE MORE

BY DON BOOMER •

natural. (For a more detailed explanation of all this, you can download the Line 6 Wireless Microphone Technology Guide at <http://tiny.cc/wireless817>.)

## FINESSING YOUR FREQUENCIES

For wireless mics to be successful in the future they will need the ability to operate successfully in ever more and more crowded "whitespace" (the available frequency range). Most conventional systems work in the DTV/UHF band (470-698 MHz) but a newer class of devices work in the ISM Bands (Industrial, Scientific, Medical) at 900 MHz and 2.4 GHz. All wireless mics are subject to interference, but since the ISM bands are limited to low power transmitters, mics working here do not have to compete with high-powered television transmitters that can cause interference from 100 miles away.

Before you buy a new wireless you need to do your homework. You need to find out which DTV channels operate within 100 miles of you and the cities you gig in, then find wireless channels that don't compete with these TV frequencies. (The FCC Info Search at <http://www.fccinfo.com/cmdpro.php?sz=L&wd=1280> can help you find info on your local stations.) If you gig in different cities, you'll have to do this for each city and cross check them. Wireless systems that operate in the ISM bands do not require this step.

Budget systems, especially in the DTV/UHF bands will become more and more problematic as the new consumer "TV Band Devices" become operational towards the end of 2010. These new devices will resemble smart phones but with much greater capabilities than current ones. You and a large part of your audience will likely have them. Up until now you have probably never had a license for your wireless but new FCC rules may require you to register your mic with a geo-database to help

avoid these devices. A license would not be required for ISM wireless mics.

## WIRELESS TALKING POINTS

Diversity receivers are a must. Nearly all quality systems use them to avoid dropouts. Dropouts happen when the transmitter and the receiver are a specific distance that causes the antenna to be in a null (or zero point) of the transmitter's antenna. By spacing a second antenna apart it is unlikely that you will ever be in a spot that both antennas are in dead.

In analog wireless systems, the number of simultaneous channels that can operate together is a good indication of how "tight" the receiver is. With digital this doesn't matter so much. A receiver with a tight front end will suffer less interference. Don't confuse this number with the number of "frequencies" a unit can operate on. Most analog units contain hundreds of frequencies but can only use between 6 and 12 together at one time.

Dynamic range is a good indicator of quality, with specs like 115 dB or higher being the most desirable. Again, this is sometimes unclear because with analog systems the dynamic range is calculated with a companding scheme applied. This is because the limit of analog FM dynamic range is only 70 dB. Dynamic range above this must be simulated.

Most, but not all, wireless mics require you to set the mic's "pads" to the performer, adjusting the mic's response for different sound levels. (Check the owner's manual.) This important step will maximize your dynamic range and minimize background hiss. You need a higher setting for a loud speech than for soft and even higher for loud singing. 20+ dB pads will be necessary for rappers that choke the ball of the mic (and even that may not be enough).

You've probably noticed a term called

"line of sight" in the range spec for your mic. This means your transmitter must clearly "see" the antennas of your receiver without walls or bodies blocking it. The easiest way to do this is to get your antennas up above the height of your audience. Make sure your antennas do not touch any metal from your rack or from another wireless receiver. Your antennas should usually point up with one pointing to 10 o'clock and one to 2 o'clock. This gives you "polarity diversity".

Some wireless systems, but again not all, require that you set the output gain and some simply output the same mic level that you would expect from a wired mic. The latter are the easiest to use because you can't set them wrong. If you have a gain control and set it too high, you may find yourself getting feedback; too low, and you'll have more background hiss.

Finally, ALWAYS know where your backup batteries are. No batteries, no mic. It's too easy to accidentally leave the mic on during sound check, only to have it die during the gig. Look for real-time battery indicators that actually measure the voltage left in your mic's battery and transmit the info to the receiver, where you get an hours and minutes indication of your remaining battery life.

Consider the future before you buy. Most wireless systems on today's market are still analog and will continue to be limited by the problems outlined. As the RF bands get more and more crowded old technologies will become more and more problematic. The new breed of digital systems now entering the market offer a brighter future moving into this uncertain future. **MB**

*Don Boomer is Microphone Product Line Manager for Line 6, Inc. ([www.line6.com](http://www.line6.com)) and is involved in developing the latest digital wireless technology for the live sound market.*



# Dressing Like Royalty

SCRIM KING PROVIDES AN ELEGANT AND EFFICIENT WAY TO CLOAK YOUR SUPPORT GEAR

BY MARTI DI BERGI •

**R**elatively new to the DJ market, Scrim King has been making more and more jocks look good with innovative new ways to cover up both industrial-looking truss structures and the common tripod.



Whatever your situation, Scrim King has you covered: the truss scrim comes in 3', 5' and 9' sections (models SS-SOX 3B/W, SS-SOX 5B/W and SS-SOX 9B/W respectively); it is also available in both white (perfect for lighting) black varieties.

As for the tripod covers (SS-SPK B/W), they also come in the white and black variety but differ from other products on the market in that they cover only the front part of the tripod. This is helpful to the operator, as they can make height/cable/scrim-lighting adjustments without having a cover in the way.

I found the products to give my rig a contemporary look and feel without drawing attention. In one instance, I took the oldest tripod set in the warehouse—a couple of twenty-year-old silver beasts that I recently coated with flat black—to a formal affair with very positive results. It seems that with covers such as these, road worn equipment is given new life in that it still functionally works without being seen by the harsh eyes of guests, halls, and planners.



On the trussing front, I am a firm believer in the look, sturdiness, and feel of the super-strong structures even if my clients may not share that fondness. For me it's a safety-first priority that truss allows, but scrim provides a middle ground that provides aesthetic bliss for the non audio/lighting aficionado.

In summary, the product is great at what it does—covering our necessary messes: essential but unsightly cable runs and other behind-the-scenes items. They provide the means to update your look without compromising your functionality in even the most upscale venues. For DJs its good to scrim, and if you scrim its good to be king, Scrim King, that is. **MB**

[www.scrim-king.com](http://www.scrim-king.com)

# For Your Listening and Lighting Pleasure

THE SOUNDOLIER DUO PROVIDES EXCELLENT SOUND WITH AN ELEGANT TOUCH

BY RYAN BURGER •

**I**n our never-ending quest for products and services that aid a DJ's business we often come across products that might be interesting for personal use rather than as professional tools. The Soundolier Duo wireless speaker set we saw at the Consumer Electronics Show falls into this category.

These aren't full-scale powered speakers with wireless units that you would use for back-fill at an event; they're for your office. But the set isn't just some new low-quality novelty item. The Soundolier Duo is developed and manufactured by Mitek, known in the 1990s for their MTX brand of speakers, amplifiers and mixers.

Every part-time disc jockey at some point dreams moving into a commercial office space that has a great place to sit down with brides and other party planners. In my opinion, this professional environment should NOT scream "DJ gear heaven." It should look the part of an office, with some fun and technology on the side. As I covered in a previous issue of Mobile Beat, BC Productions, the parent company of Mobile Beat and BCP DJs, moved into corporate offices a couple years ago. We have set up our office so we can run both the publishing business and our "DJ-Oriented Production Company" out of the same location, with 800 square feet of office divided into three offices and a reception area where we meet with clients.

We have added these Soundolier Duo wireless "lamp" speakers to the office and it allows us to play audio wirelessly from our computers in the reception area as we go through music with the couples when planning their wedding. And besides being good-sounding speakers, they really are beautiful upright lamps that provide a stylish touch for the decor, and accent the room much better than the typical office florescent ceiling lighting.

Technically speaking, each speaker unit houses a 5-1/4" powered full-range speaker with 360-degree dispersion. They use the 2.4GHz frequency to receive a signal from the included transmitter from up to 200 feet away. Each complete lamp-speaker combo is 37 lbs. and is built very tough.

I can see the Soundolier Duo turning up in all kinds of other places, such as bars, lounges, patios, not to mention living rooms; in other words, wherever they can be used for classy, wireless, high-quality sound. **MB**



[www.soundolier.com](http://www.soundolier.com)



# New Luminescent Creature Spotted

AMERICAN DJ'S NEW JELLYFISH CASTS LED IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT

BY GERALD JOHNSON •

**L**ED effect lights are a tricky entity. First, they must be functional, cool, and carry unique properties that make the switch to LED fixtures worthwhile for a mobile entertainer. Then, they must be bright enough to actually create an effect in a real world performance scenario. Finally, they must be affordable for DJs with (now more than ever) a low gear-purchasing budget. The Jellyfish, new from American DJ, achieves all of these aims with a few surprising twists and impressive turns along the way.

## DEMONSTRATING ADAPTATION

Basic effect lights usually have very limited capabilities when it comes to their actual use. DMX-wise, it has been common for the fixture to be confined to six channels or less (if there was even DMX capability) and most often, one or two of those channels were rather pointless. Serving both the plug-and-play level and the accomplished lighting designer, American DJ's Jellyfish lets the user choose between a simple 3-channel configuration or a more advanced 28-channel setup. I like to think this serves as an indication that DJs are ready for more advanced lighting control options on effects fixtures and DJ-oriented products. It seems DMX is being taken seriously by a large percentage of DJs. For those wanting the simple route, the standard master/slave and sound active modes are provided, with great built-in programs and cycles.

The Jellyfish also touts some impressive hardware, with 84 5mm LEDs (21 red, 21 blue, 21 green, 21 white). Set up in matrixes of 3x4, each group contains 3 red, 3 blue, 3 green, and 3 white diodes positioned for maximum efficiency in a triangle formation. But even with all of that circuitry, the fixture has a maximum power draw of only 13 watts—making the Jellyfish perfect for being added to almost any light show (and with IEC power link capability, the fixtures are even easier to power).

## RADIANT PERSONALITY

Let's face it: Some lights only look good when haze or fog is present, which is not always an option. In the past, only the pattern created and the beam emitted by the fixture were part of the light show, and were dependent upon room conditions. The Jellyfish takes a gigantic step forward and asks the obvious Why can't the fixture itself be a part of the light show?

Encased in a clear plastic shell, the unit itself becomes a part of the spectacle by glowing along with the light that is released.

So, it may be still be true that the patterns and beams are the main component of the output, but now those staring directly at the lights now have something to look at. Another question comes to mind: Is the inclusion of this relatively new principle on other releases. Will we see a clear moving head or a clear can light? Or will we see equipment buyers decide that flat black is their finish of choice?

## GONE FISHIN'

At this year's NAMM show and again at MBLVX the Jellyfish (along with the Vizi Spot LED) was a lighting hit among DJs. With its lightweight, clear finish, and expanded presentation, the Jellyfish is an ingenious move into the future for ADJ. DJs loved the way it looked, its price point (\$180), and the name. I also see a lot of capabilities present on this fixture that have been absent in LED fixtures before—such as an increased DMX capability and



brighter diodes.

It will be necessary for this light to be encased during travel, as given its light weight (5 lbs.) and plastic casing—combined with my notorious roughness on equipment—I can see this light showing some wear.

The Jellyfish is probably the coolest basic effect light I have seen come out in the last three years. Above all else, it's just different. It's not black, it's not squarish; it's just not your typical DJ fixture. Besides service and experience, "uniqueness" is often considered an important mobile entertainment trait, and is certainly a hard one to achieve in an industry so conducive to "sameness." With that in mind, from an equipment perspective, the Jellyfish is a glowing option for those who want to be different. **MB**

[www.americandj.com](http://www.americandj.com)



# Revving Up Digital DJing with RPM

NEW SOFTWARE ADDS EXTRA HORSEPOWER TO TAKE DJ SOFTWARE IN A NEW DIRECTION

BY BRAD DUNSBERGEN •

**I**t's a funny thing when you start talking DJ software with other DJs. You will find that opinions couldn't vary more widely and everyone has thoughts on what is the very best.

If you don't believe me, look at any one of the various DJ forums on the internet and you will see what I mean. I admit, when it comes to software, I am most certainly stuck in my ways. So when I dove into reviewing the new RPM software from Gizmolabs, I was less than enthused at first, because it looked so different from anything that I have ever used in the past. Yet, sometimes the old adage rings true: Change can be a good thing. I shouldn't have judged this book (or software box) by its cover.

## CHANGE IS GOOD

Installing and setting up RPM was a snap. With a standard internet connection, I followed the download link and followed the onscreen prompts—which took merely minutes. RPM supports most ASIO, DirectX, and MME soundcards and can use up to five independent outputs. So, if you already have a nice external or internal sound card, RPM has you covered, and then some.

Once installed, it was time to import some music. This is done

by simply by clicking on the file menu and adding a file or folder, similar to importing tracks into Apple's iTunes. It took about 5 to 10 seconds for RPM to scan each song for BPM, AutoCue points, BeatGrid, and Gain



Compensation. If you have a large music library you may want to let this run while you have plenty of downtime—early in the week before your event, not the day before!

The library can be browsed by scrolling through the songs or using the search box and tracks can be dragged to one of three decks. That's right, I said three decks; this is a major difference between RPM and other programs (more on that later), giving it more of a "multi-track" feel, similar to GarageBand and ProTools. Also provided are many ways to organize your music, including normal playlists and "smart" playlists. One of the extremely cool features of RPM is "Smartview," which tracks what you play and will make suggestions accordingly based on BPM, Genre, Past Sets, and Year of each track. There is also a Waitlist, a holding area for tracks you may want to play later.

## COMMAND YOUR BPMS WITH RPM

After the tracks have been scanned and been selected, it is time to get mixing. RPM offers three different ways to do this: internal mode, MIDI-capable control, or via time-coded vinyl/CD. Internal mode is just like it sounds: Your mouse and keyboard control all the buttons, knobs and faders onscreen. In MIDI mode, RPM is pre-mapped to be controlled by hardware controllers from leading manufacturers or other MIDI devices. RPM can also be used in "old school mode" controlled by way of time-coded vinyl or CDs, including records or CDs from other programs and manufacturers, making RPM the very versatile.

As mentioned, the GUI is a unique three-deck design. Gone are the virtual turntables or CD decks of the typical DJ program. It seems the assumption is that you don't need that kind of visual reference to mix properly. (You'll obviously have to make that decision for yourself; see the website for a demo.) Each deck has tempo, key and pitch controls as well as three-band EQ. The tempo can be varied by plus or minus eight percent to help with beat-mixing, with excellent pitch correction (so no pitch change, and metallic sound as with some other programs). Also cool is the key control, which provides the option of varying by up to plus or minus 24% without changing the tempo. On top of that, pitch can be varied by plus or minus eight percent and works the same way as a turntable—when you pitch up or down the tempo and key will change accordingly.

Each deck includes loop controls. Four-beat loops can be done easily, as well as setting up to five cue points (each with the touch of a button). Effects sections are to right of each deck. Here you find spin up/spin down, dump, and step plus or minus 1. The spin up and spin down act like a turntable being powered off or on, much like a brake or reverse effect. Dump is handy for censoring unpleasant words in a songs by reversing playback instantly, then picking up where it would normally be if the tracks was played forward without any interruption. The step plus or minus 1 buttons skip the song forward or backwards one beat to avoid portions of words or quickly synch during manual mixing.

For even more fun, the plug-in section gives you access to VST effects that can be loaded and used with RPM (a quick internet search will yield you a nearly endless variety of effects—many free—that can be used). The filter section has low shelf, high shelf, low pass, high pass, band pass and EQ pass. These are controlled via the "slide ball" in the middle of the filter view (by dragging with your mouse in internal mode or through a controller in MIDI mode).

Most importantly, for performance in internal mode, the mixer section appears at the center of your screen. It includes a standard layout with crossfader, channel faders, headphone crossfader and headphone volume. Much like a hardware controller, this is really the brains behind your output and should be paired with a good quality sound card for best results (be it internal or external). A good quality sound card is also required for cueing and plugging in effects.

## EMBRACING CHANGE

The best way to get a true appreciation of what RPM has to offer is to go to the Gizmolabs website and try out the demo for yourself. I'll admit I had unfairly judged RPM before I tried it, and I had my opinion completely changed after taking it for a spin. When you try the demo, you will realize that RPM offers a powerful library, true-sounding scratching, great automated mixing and some of the best, most versatile controller support around. RPM also stands out for those that come from a radio or audio production background, because of its more multi-track-style layout, as well as the extensive effects options. Like me, you may be unsure at first—but if RPM fits your style then you've just embraced a different sort of digital revolution. **MB**

[www.gizmolabs.net](http://www.gizmolabs.net)



# Hold the Phone... New dJay Control App Released

BY MARC ANDREWS •

**H**ot off the presses is a new application for the iPhone that interacts with DJ software on your Mac.

In the January issue of Mobile Beat Magazine we reviewed a DJ software application called dJay for the Mac.

To summarize, for years there have been only a few Mac DJ applications that are geared for the mobile DJ (disregarding remix/scratch-focused programs such as Serato, which are often multi-platform). MegaSeg's Mac DJ product is a great option especially if you want video and other fine-tuning functionality, but released recently from algoriddim, a German developer, dJay 3 is a fantastic new program that's strongest suit is its interaction with iTunes. It not only allows imports and exports to the iTunes system but direct connection with the software.

Well, now dJay has gone a step further. By purchasing a \$4.99 application from the Apple iTunes App Store, you can control your dJay 3.1 application (free upgrade



from 3.0) from a wi-fi connection on your iPhone or iPod touch. And we aren't just talking volume control here; you can use the crossfader, apply effects, load between the two decks, scratch and more. It shows album covers, track details, and playlists, pretty much everything you would see in your iTunes or in the computer-based dJay application—yet all

wirelessly from a distance.

Ultimately what I would like to see is an application for my iPhone that does everything that the dJay Remote does with its native cousin program, allowing deeper interaction with the system similar to what you would get with a MIDI controller connected with other DJ software. It's clear that this could eventually become a crowded marketplace, with all the development that is happening for the iPhone and now iPad. Stay tuned to Mobile Beat Magazine and MobileBeat.Com constant updates on all areas of digital DJ gear. **MB**

[www.djay-software.com/accessories/remote](http://www.djay-software.com/accessories/remote)

# Building a Better Gizmo

DJ SOFTWARE PIONEER JORGEN HEDBERG REFLECTS ON A DECADE OF DEVELOPMENT AND DESCRIBES HIS NEW ENTERPRISE

**T**he name Jorgen Hedberg might not mean a lot to you unless you are well versed in the behind-the-scenes development of MP3 playback software for DJs during the last 10 years. After developing the well-known software, Jorgen is now out on his own with an endeavor called GizmoLabs, with some great new software poised to hit the DJ market.

**Mobile Beat:** Jorgen, please introduce yourself. Tell us a little bit about how we get up to the current day and the current incarnation of the GizmoLabs crew.

**Jorgen Hedberg:** Well, I started a little over 10 years ago and we've been working with MP3 all that time, actually. And I would say that now for the first time we've got our own package together that we've really wanted to do from the very beginning and are in control of everything, which feels nice.

What can I say? All the stuff that we've learned over the years in terms of what people use, what they want, and what we've seen them use and how to use it has gotten to this stage, that I think we've got a really good package together.

**MB:** You guys have always been in the background developing products that were then OEM'd out to other companies.

**JH:** Yeah, exactly. We've done development for [a number of companies]. So we have algorithms and DSP and DSP cards and in-the-guts kind of things running in products—thousands of products right now. So our technology and stuff that we've developed, it's in the market. It doesn't have our name on it because we've OEM'd it. So a lot of people are using our stuff without knowing it.

**MB:** Tell us about your current development team.

**JH:** Well, the group we have now is the people from the same group that we started out in '99...so it's kind of a déjà vu. It's really nice. What can I say? It's people I've known a long time and we know what we want. Yeah. It's great.





...When the whole thing started with PCDJ, I wasn't in that company for very long; about a year and a half or two years, maybe. And I had a vision. When I came to the US, I had a little board with some buttons on it and I could hook it up to a computer and I could press a few buttons and play and start. And I told them, "Look, this is what I want to do. I want to hook up to a computer that can play music." And that was the idea.

And then they started to do a lot of other activities. It was a crazy IT age; the IT bubble with Internet and Napster and banner ads and all that. And they were more interested in that kind of area and I figured, "Well, let's just do this."

So what I did, I quit from VisioSonic and started GizmoLabs. And this was in 2001. And at that point I just started that myself. I kind of just stepped out of everything that I was doing and said, "Okay. Let's start again and see how this goes."

**M B:** Let's get to current stuff. GizmoLabs.net is the Web address. The product is RPM. Tell us a little bit about what RPM is and what some of your plans are.

**J H:** Well, RPM is an all-types DJ application that you can DJ with, and we have a whole suite of products coming out. It's based on technology that we developed for a long, long time in terms of record case management, DSP algorithms in terms of time stretch, looping, and all that stuff that we perfected during the years. So we have a lot of stuff coming out and this is the first product in that series of products that's coming out.

**M B:** What's different from some of the other products out there? It seems like you're getting a ton of different

streams of audio going at one time. What are you able to do now that you weren't able to in the past?

**J H:** Well, first, we can do what we really wanted to do and go in the direction that we wanted to do, which means that we are making DJ software. We're making things that we want to do that we would buy, if you know what I mean. We're not trying to chase the dollar in terms of "Oh, that looks profitable so let's go that direction." We're doing stuff, products that we would like to buy, and hopefully that other people would like to buy, too. So money's kind of a nice by-product out of that. That's the biggest difference.

...We have a record case that learns how you play. So as you play, the more and more you play, it gives you suggestions of how you can mix. That's kind of a new way of looking at things...So when you select tracks, it gives you selections of things—you can mix with this because this you've done before. And it also gives you that list in the order of [what you've done] most. So you get it like in a prioritized order as well.

**M B:** I understand that you are working with some of the different controller companies...so your software is designed to be compatible with a range of hardware?

**J H:** Yes. We have an approach of making everything as auto-detectable and auto-connectable as possible. It's very hard to map out the controller. Even if you have a good mapper, it's very hard to get the mapping really good. So we've done input plug-ins in a way that they can detect what controllers you plug in. And we worked really hard on making that support really excellent.

We worked for many years with Denon, for instance, at making the controllers really, really compatible. And I think we have the best Denon controller support for the DJ programs, for ins and out, the displays, the platter support, the scratch support, and so on.

**M B:** I see people can download a demo of RPM to play around with it. What limitations does it have?

**J H:** The demo is not really limited. The only thing it's limited in is that it operates only in chunks of 30 minutes at a time. It doesn't have any limitations in terms of functionality...

...I can say, try it out and keep working with it for a while and I think you will like it, because it's in the details that you will find the smoothness and how well it works. It's all in the details. That's all I can say. **MB**





## HERCULES DJ CONSOLE MK4 ON THE WAY

The Hercules DJ Console Mk4 dual-deck-style DJ controller, featuring built-in audio (PC and Mac compatible), will be available in June 2010. Portable and compact, the controller measures 10.4" x 7.3" and weighs 3.3 lbs. In addition to two stereo outputs (for mixing and previewing), the DJ Console Mk4 also features two stereo audio inputs to connect any analog audio sources.



Other features: USB power; two stereo inputs include phono, standard line, professional line, and boosted line levels to connect any external audio sources; head-phone output; microphone input (with talk-over function); two jog wheels, one crossfader,

two volume faders, two pitch encoder knobs, six EQ knobs and 36 mappable buttons.

The unit comes bundled with VirtualDJ DJC Edition mixing software, and also includes functions for synchronizing tracks, automatic loops, adding multiple effects, and recording mixes.

A protective cover and a shoulder strap are provided. For visual appeal, a sub-skin featuring a printed graphic is also part of the package.

Requirements: PC: 1.5 GHz processor or higher, 1 GB of RAM, Windows 7 / XP / Vista (32/64-bit), USB port, stereo speakers and/or headphones; Mac: 1.5 GHz processor or higher, 1 GB of RAM, Mac OS 10.4 / 10.5 / 10.6, USB port, stereo speakers and/or headphones.

[www.herculesdjmixroom.com](http://www.herculesdjmixroom.com)

## AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT...

Orange Amplifiers, A UK-based pioneer in guitar amplification, has launched a unique all-in-one computer amplifier speaker, the OPC. It is a fully integrated computer with internal speaker, which delivers music playing, recording, editing and computing capabilities. The OPC claims a number of firsts: the first computer of its kind to have a built-in, high-powered speaker for full-range hi-fi as well as vintage guitar sounds; the first computer to have a



universal input jack enabling users to plug in a multitude of musical instruments (guitar, keyboard, etc.) and peripherals such as the iPod, MP3 players,

microphones, etc. A unique cooling system to ensure air goes in and exits only after cooling the internal computer

As a fully fledged computer the OPC has 4 GB DDR2-RAM, a 500 GB hard drive, Intel chips, Windows 7 x64 Home Premium installed, eight USB 2.0 ports, is Wi-Fi enabled and has a graphics card with ATI 5670 512MB option.

The first models will include amp modeling software as well as a free branded recording software package. The OPC is due to be released in June 2010.

[www.orangeamps.com](http://www.orangeamps.com)

## X-LASER SINGS PRAISES OF NOCTURNE

A leader in mid to high-powered custom laser systems designed specifically for DJs, bands and clubs, X-Laser has launched a new product line called Nocturne, featuring projectors powerful enough to be at home in even the largest of venues. Widely regarded as the maker of the world's safest high-power laser systems, X-Laser's aim is to provide the same effects as those seen in the superclubs of Europe and Asia, but with supra-compliant US safety features and at affordable prices.



Nocturnelaser.com has become the Internet hub for features and specs of the new line. As well as providing all of the information that users need about the specific laser designs and technical applications of the Nocturne product line, a gallery of photos reveals the capabilities of custom-tailored Nocturne laser system in multiple venues, from basic to extravagant. The Nocturne series has over fifty different models to suit every need.

[www.nocturnelaser.com](http://www.nocturnelaser.com)

## XPRESS YOURSELF

American DJ's new Xpress LED is a high-energy moonflower effect powered by a brilliant 10W white LED light source, and loaded with 15 gobo/color combinations, putting a whole repertoire of cool-looking images right at your fingertips. This sound-activated effect is easy to use: Just turn it on and patterns will rotate back and forth and change to the beat of the music. Ideal for mobile DJs, nightclubs and small venues, the Xpress LED also includes an eye-popping strobe effect. Featuring a 34-degree beam angle and manual focusing lens, the Xpress LED will project clear, sharp, colorful images anywhere in the room. With its state-of-the-art LED light source, gobo and color effects look work with or without fog.

The Xpress LED's light source is rated at 30,000 hours, so users don't have to contend with the hassle and expense of changing lamps. And thanks to the low heat generation of LEDs, it never gets too hot, keeping a comfortable room temperature for partygoers on the dance floor, eliminating the need for on/off duty cycles, and letting DJs load out their lighting effects faster than ever before, since no cool-down period is required.



[www.americandj.com](http://www.americandj.com)



# Cleaning Up Your Act

TAKE A NEAT AND CAREFUL APPROACH TO EVERYTHING  
—YOUR SUCCESS COULD DEPEND ON IT

BY PAUL KIDA, THE DJ COACH •

**O**kay, DJs across America, it's time to take a moment to do a little bit of reflection about the kind of image that we are presenting to the public, and also to think about how we can keep ourselves, our clients and their guests safe. In addition, we will also discuss some ways that we can keep ourselves protected both in a physical sense as well as legally. These are just some common sense ideas so that we can be the best that we can be.

## MAINTAINING VOCAL HYGIENE

Yes, neatness does count! I'm sure you are familiar with the old saying, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." Whether you agree with it or not, it's true that we only get one chance to impress and "wow" our clients. We have to make sure that we don't waste this golden opportunity. How does neatness have a part? Let's take a look at what is generally our first contact with a prospective client: a telephone conversation. What's that I hear you saying? How can you show this on the telephone?

Vocal presentation can be neat in delivery. First of all, do you speak at an

acceptable volume level? Your voice needs to have sufficient power, but not be overbearing. Are you clean and concise in our speaking, enunciating your words correctly and not slurring or using slang terms so that potential clients have trouble understanding what you mean? After all, they are interviewing the potential Master of Ceremonies for their event: someone who needs to be able to speak to a crowd and have them understand directions. You should also speak at a moderate pace, so that those listening will be able to follow your words easily and take in the information that you are giving them.

You should smile as you speak to them on the phone. If you've heard this before and you're skeptical, go ahead and give it another try. It really works. This will add a little extra "something" to your voice, actually conveying a warmth and personal feeling that will make your clients at ease and comfortable. It helps break down that initial barrier of distrust that might be there. By cultivating a warm feeling in your voice, it will draw people to you, even on the phone. It will also show that you are truly interested in them and sincere in your desire to give them the best wedding or party possible. True warmth is not simply a sales gimmick, it must be genuine and from the heart. You must believe what you are saying yourself. When it's conveyed properly, those listening to you will feel this belief. Along with a little enthusiasm, your "neat" voice will help you to book more jobs.

Just a side note, if you work from home and take calls there: There is nothing more annoying or unprofessional than to hear children screaming or crying, dogs barking, or general household noise in the background. If you can, you should have a private place where you can take calls so that you are undisturbed. It just makes for a much more professional aural image.

## DRESSING FOR SUCCESS: THE UNTOLD STORIES

How about our own physical neatness? These are the simple things we are probably all doing, but some might take for granted. Is your grooming up to par? Do you have neat and clean hair, fingernails clipped and clean, and a suit or tuxedo that is pressed and spot free? What about the clothes that you wear to load and unload our equipment into the venue? We might feel that these clothes are not important since we will change later. However, as we are loading, people may be watching, such as the staff or other vendors. Maybe this is the first time we have worked at this particular venue. If we really want to be recommended by them, do we want to be seen in an old T-shirt and ripped jeans? A lot of times, these people are not there after we have changed, so they might even think that we just work that way. If we have on a good, clean pair of shoes, a good pair of jeans (with no holes!) and a clean t-shirt or polo shirt (perhaps with our company logo, etc.) it makes for a much better first impression. You would also want to make sure that your car or van is clean also.

Let's not forget our equipment and the way it is set up. Are your cases, speakers and other components cleaned regularly so that they do not accumulate dirt, lint, grass if outside, or anything else? Wires and cables should be properly encased or hidden so that they have an uncluttered appearance. Please remember that at every event, you are representing the client. It is your job to make their choice of hiring you look like an excellent, smart choice. Plus, how you look is partially an advertisement to potential new clients at the event who could book you later.

Do not neglect your marketing materials. Websites and emails should be easy



*Paul Kida, The DJ Coach, is a founding member of the Colorado Disc Jockey Association. He owns JAMMCATTS DJ Entertainment ([www.jammcattdj.com](http://www.jammcattdj.com)), and is a regular speaker at the Mobile Beat DJ Show.*





to navigate and read. I have seen a few DJ websites that have the background color of lime green with purple fonts! You just cannot read it. You can be unique and stand out from others, but still use common sense. If a bride cannot easily navigate your site or the colors make her eyes want to bleed, she won't stay long. Brochures and business cards should be clean and uncluttered, not dog-eared or tattered. The same would go for any other advertising like banners, posters, etc. Make sure the impression you leave is always a good one.

### TAKE CARE

Let's move on to the subject of being safe. We want to keep ourselves safe, as well as those in attendance at our events. To begin with, you need to have and maintain the reliable equipment necessary to perform our jobs well. When we are loading and/or unloading at a venue, do you carry in as much as you possibly can at one time? This is really not a good idea, both for your body as well as your equipment.

You run the risk of dropping thousands of dollars of equipment, not to mention breaking something that you may need for the event that night. Don't overload yourself!

Are you prepared for inclement weather? Rain and snow can have a dramatic effect on how we drive and how/where we set-up for an event. I know here in Colorado you have to be prepared for any kind of weather—it can change in a moment's notice! Do not neglect the proper upkeep of your vehicle. Checking tires for wear and proper pressure, regular oil changes, windshield wipers, and all-around maintenance not only keep us safe on the road, but get us to our jobs month after month without problems or delays.

Always allow yourself enough (or more than enough) time to get to your gigs, taking into consideration driving conditions and possible traffic slow downs. One thing we tend to forget sometimes is that if we own a vehicle with our company name and logo, we are really advertising ourselves on the road, so you

would want to make sure you are observing traffic laws and speed limits, as well as being courteous to other drivers. Make sure that nothing distracts from the image that you want to advertise. Today it is uncommon, but a smile on your face can go a long way to a good image.

Once at the event, keep in mind the safety of your guests. Tape down any loose cords to the floor when possible, and try to place speaker stands where they will not be a tripping hazard. Also keep lighting away from small hands. Children are attracted to the flashing lights. Some parents will even bring the child over and lift them up to get closer, not realizing how hot the lights can be. If you have a lot of children at your event, a brief announcement about the possible danger can help the parents keep their children safe. The same is true of props, bubble machines, balloons or anything else that could become a hazard for young children.

You must also think about keeping your equipment safe. It is always a good idea to check the power outlets you are using, especially if you do a lot of gigs at historic and/or older venues. I have found out the hard way at some of the older sites here in Colorado that they don't always keep up with the newest electrical components. A ground meter and a voltage meter could mean the difference between a great event and "fried" equipment! You can pick up these tools at any hardware store for a very low cost. They have saved my gear several times.

### WATCHING YOUR BOTTOM LINE

There is one more area we need to discuss that needs protection. Unfortunately, we are talking about protecting your business and reputation from unscrupulous clients. We are living in an ever-changing society that at times brings out the worst in peo-



**Remember that at every event, you are representing the client. It is your job to make their choice of hiring you look like an excellent, smart choice.**

ple. Gone are the days when a handshake sealed the deal and a man's word was his bond! While it is true that the majority of our clients are honest, hard-working people like ourselves, there is that small percentage that may cause us trouble. I want to preface this with the fact that I am absolutely not giving any legal advice, but this is my own opinion based on my experiences.

First of all, protect yourself with a good, well-written contract. It should have all of the pertinent information of the event written out, such as date of event, number of hours, start and end time, an overtime policy, total price, retainer fee, and any miscellaneous fees like travel, etc. I always have both the bride and groom sign the contract (or in the case of corporate events, whoever is actually responsible for payment). You can always have a lawyer look it over to make sure that you are as protected as possible. (For those of you who are ADJA members, you have an invaluable asset. Simply contact the national office and they will point you in the right direction.)

Always keep good records. If something changes, have the client initial those changes on the contract. That way, there

is no misunderstanding later. While at the event, if possible, set up a video camera that shows everyone, especially the bride and groom having a great time dancing, as well as parents and guests. If you can't video, then take a camera along and shoot a few photos of the same. This will give sure evidence of the great job you have done by keeping the dance floor packed. It doesn't have to be professional quality photo or video, just good

enough to show the fun. Just file it away with your usual paperwork afterward. You will probably never need it, but it could also be the one thing that saves you.

Some DJs think that offering a guarantee is a great way to book jobs. Others will tell you that it can open you up to legal action by dishonest clients. I won't tell you what to do one way or the other on this one. However, a legal advisor has told me that the word "guarantee" should never be spoken or used in your advertising or sales materials or on your website. Whatever your decision on this one, simply perform your due diligence and make an informed decision that will protect you and your business. If you do decide to include it in your adver-

tising, make sure you say something like "We guarantee the following..." then make a list of everything that is included and provided instead of making just a blanket guarantee with no explanation of what is included.

Being careful about all aspects of your image (personal appearance, gear, vehicle, on-site setup, interactions with clients, etc.) is a key to success in this unique service-based industry. How good you look—in every way—and how well protected you and your clients and your mutual interests are, can truly effect your bottom line: your numbers of referrals and bookings. If you remind yourself to be neat, stay safe and keep yourself protected, you will definitely have the edge on the competition as you continue to provide outstanding service to all of your clients. **MB**

*Please send any comments on this article, suggestions for future articles or questions to [djcoach@mobilebeat.com](mailto:djcoach@mobilebeat.com).*







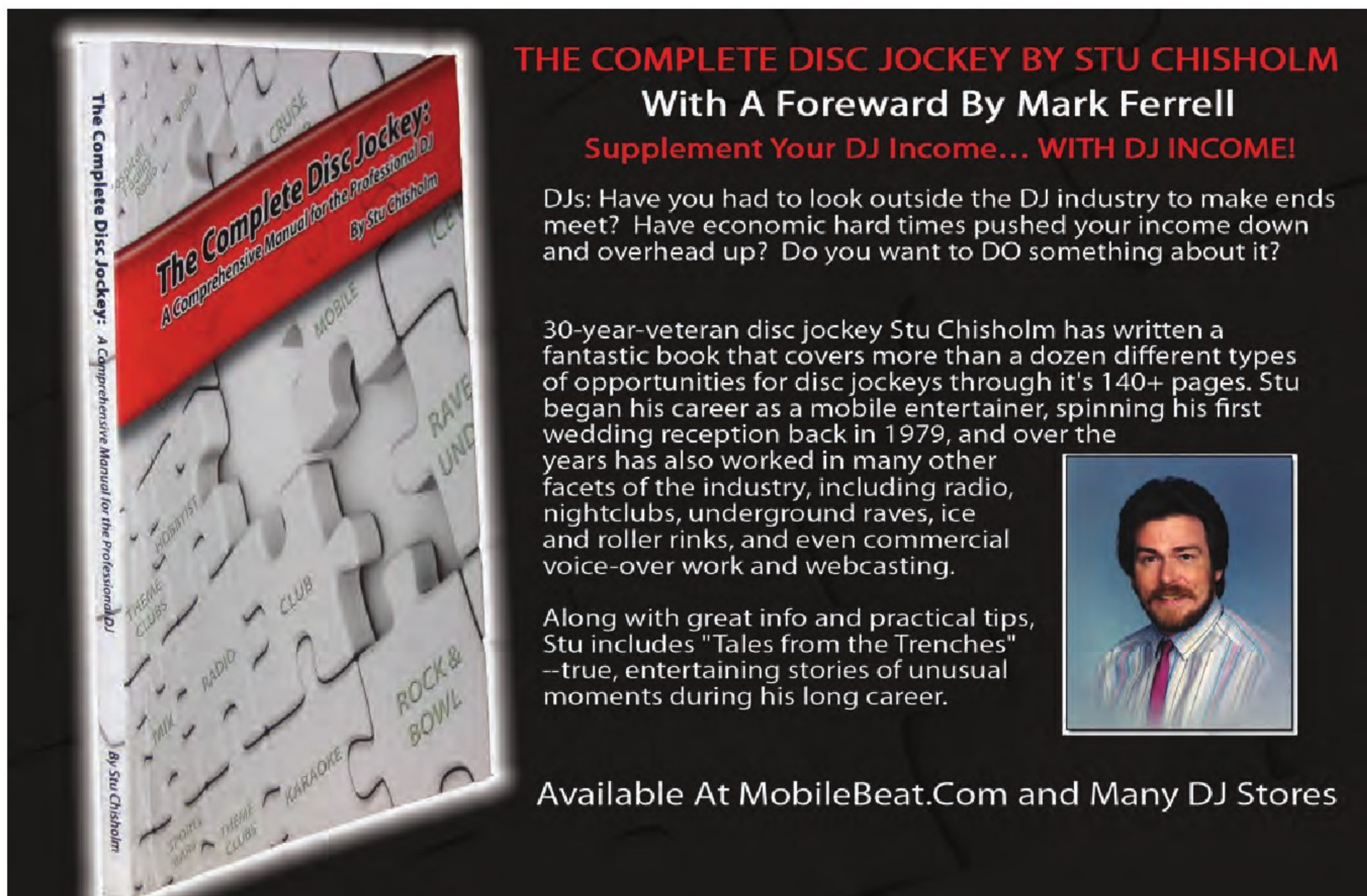
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## THE COMPLETE DISC JOCKEY BY STU CHISHOLM

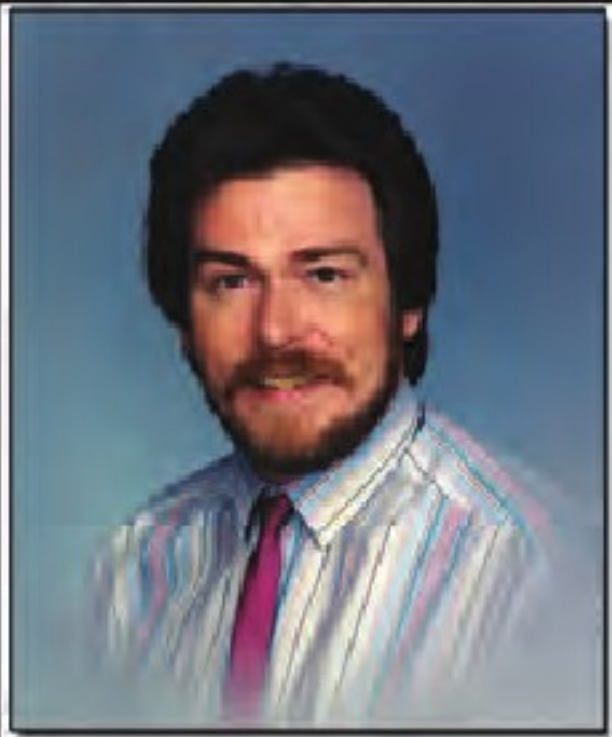
With A Foreward By Mark Ferrell

**Supplement Your DJ Income... WITH DJ INCOME!**

DJs: Have you had to look outside the DJ industry to make ends meet? Have economic hard times pushed your income down and overhead up? Do you want to DO something about it?

30-year-veteran disc jockey Stu Chisholm has written a fantastic book that covers more than a dozen different types of opportunities for disc jockeys through it's 140+ pages. Stu began his career as a mobile entertainer, spinning his first wedding reception back in 1979, and over the years has also worked in many other facets of the industry, including radio, nightclubs, underground raves, ice and roller rinks, and even commercial voice-over work and webcasting.

Along with great info and practical tips, Stu includes "Tales from the Trenches"—true, entertaining stories of unusual moments during his long career.



Available At [MobileBeat.Com](http://MobileBeat.Com) and Many DJ Stores



# Profiting from Non-Profits

WORKING WITH NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS: HOW TO MAKE IT A WIN-WIN

BY ROB PETERS •

**P**hone inquiries or e-mails requesting DJ services as “donations” from not – for – profit organizations, or requests for complementary services for fundraisers are not uncommon for most DJs.

These organizations generally are legitimate, and are trying to do the same thing we are as business owners: raise money without having to spend money. However, there are many myths and inconsistencies associated with how these events can benefit you. This article is intended to help you identify the most common myths around donating your services, and provide you with information about tax-exempt and non-profit organizations. I also hope to inspire you with practical strategies that will help you benefit from doing events for non-profit organizations.

## WHAT IS A NON-PROFIT, ANYWAY?

The variety of non-profit organizations classified by the Internal Revenue Service can become very confusing. It is important to note that if an organization is tax-exempt, it does NOT necessarily mean that they are non-profit.

The most common type of non-profit classified by the IRS is the 503 C3. Donations made to 503 C3 organizations are tax-deductible. Organizations that are classified as 503 C3 generally are those whose purposes are charitable, religious, scientific, educational, or literary. 503 C3 organizations can also be groups whose purpose is to prevent cruelty to children or animals, or organizations that foster national or international amateur sports competitions. Most public charities also fall under the 503 C3 classification, as they are organizations who receive a substantial part of their income from the general public and/or the federal government.

Some private foundations who receive their income from endowments or investments, and use that income to make grants to other organizations are also classified as 503 C3 non-profit organizations.

There are two other non-profit classifications that you may encounter as a mobile DJ. Groups that are classified as 501 C4 organizations are those who may perform a substantial amount of legislative lobbying on behalf of specific issues and/or primarily engage in social welfare activities. 501 C4 organizations also may include civic associations, some volunteer fire departments and local associations of employees. Donations to 501 C4 organizations are generally not tax-deductible as charitable donations, but ARE deductible as a business expense.

Business leagues, chambers of commerce, trade associations, real estate boards and boards of trade are generally classified as 501 C6 non-profit organizations. Donations to such groups are generally handled like donations to 501 C4 non-profit organizations: They are not deductible as a charitable expense and can be deducted as a business expense.

There are other non-profit classifications in addition to the above, and they can be rather confusing to understand. When in doubt, ask the organization what their classification is, or speak to your accountant about what can be a tax deductible contribution.

MYTH: Donating your services to a non-profit event or organization is considered a tax deduction or “write off” on your taxes!

In IRS Publication 526 (“Charitable Contributions”), there are clear rules and regulations about what kind of charitable contributions can be considered tax deductible. Because our DJ services are considered to be intangible (meaning there is no physical end product being given away), donations of services are considered to be a donation of time, similar to volunteering for a specific non-profit orga-

nization. Therefore, according to the IRS, donations of the value of our services can not be considered a tax deductible donation to a non-profit organization.

## EXPOSURE TO PROFIT

So how can you create a better company image AND profit from working with non-profit organizations? Please note that there is nothing wrong with donating your time or services complementary to a non-profit organization. If you do chose to donate your services, the biggest benefit would be the exposure for your business...which could be the best, most cost-effective marketing you can do. Scott Faver, the Game Master, once said “Every performance is an opportunity to expose your DJ skills and talents to a group of potential clients who may need your services.” Performing for a walk-a-thon or a fund-raising event is a great way to do just that.

But take it one step further. If you are going to simply donate your services for an event, maximize your exposure. Here are some ideas:

Have signage or a banner on your table, and have PLENTY of business cards available

Ask about receiving an advertisement in the event’s program booklet

Inquire about having your company logo included on all promotional materials, including posters, t-shirts, press releases, banners or any items used to promote the non-profit organization or their event.

Are there sponsorships being sold for the event? If so, ask if you can barter your services for one of the sponsorships and receive the benefits offered in the sponsorship package. (Normally, if you are included as a sponsor, you will receive the benefits of being mentioned or having your logo included in the marketing and promotional materials and press releases for the event.)

Will there be media interviews to promote the event? If so, offer to help



promote the event by being one of the event's spokespeople and being interviewed. We speak in front of audiences all the time as mobile DJs; why not help promote the event by using some of the skills you already have? (If you do choose this option, remember that your media appearance is about the event, and is not an opportunity to promote your DJ company, in and of itself. Obtain a list of facts and key points from the organization that they would like promoted and stick to them, but do not be afraid to mention that you will be the DJ and/or the Master of Ceremonies.)

Donating your services can only gain you additional perspective clients. By taking into account other factors like the exposure you and your performance provide, taking time to hand out business cards and brochures, and utilizing the helpful ideas stated above can only assist you in gaining more leads for your business. All on top of the fact that being the "good guy" is a great way to give back to the community.

## SHOW ME THE MONEY

With the continuing rise in gas prices and costs we have in running our DJ business, doing a show for free to generate goodwill and only potential future business can become a challenging decision. But there are ways to work with non-profit organizations and events that can help you benefit, with SOME financial compensation or benefit. Understanding charitable contributions and the IRS rules around them, plus a little education with your prospective non-profit clientele can help you benefit WITHOUT having to donate your services. And the benefits go beyond financial compensation.

The first way to benefit by working with non-profit organizations is by getting the tax deductible donation the RIGHT way. When booking with a non-profit organization and educating them (In my experience, the majority of the people who book events for non-profit organizations believe the myth mentioned above to be true), offer to make a donation in the amount of your services IN EXCHANGE for being compensated for your services. In this case, there is no immediate financial benefit, but your donation is considered to be tax deductible.

You may also consider doing a discounted rate for non-profit events. This could be a discounted fee direct to the

non-profit organization, or you may use the above technique by being compensated your total fee, and providing a partial donation back to the organization. In the end, the profit will allow you to cover expenses such as fuel, travel or any unexpected items that may come up from doing the event. In either case, remember that the dollar amount of the donation written to the non-profit is the amount that would be tax deductible.

In addition to the above, there are several different ways to maximize future business from performing these events.

One way is to offer to help raise funds by offering your services. Have the organization promote you to their affiliates, guests of the event or staff, and offer to make a donation to the charity for every event that is booked as a result of your performance. (ie. For every event booked by a guest, staff, or affiliate of the charity, you will make a \$25 donation to the charity.) This is a great way to give back, even after the event is over.

If you have a referral program that rewards your existing customers for referrals, use your referral program to make a donation to the charity on behalf of the referring party for every referral that books with your company before the event. This program not only will help the fundraiser, but also can be used to help promote the event and your participation in it.

If there are no silent auctions or door prizes scheduled at the event, why not help add to the fund-raising and help develop your mailing list by creating your own. Purchase a gift certificate to a restaurant and obtain a receipt. (The purchase of the gift certificate can be a tax deductible donation to the charity, provided the gift certificate is given away at the charitable event and specifically used to raise funds

for the charity). Set up a booth and sell raffle tickets to give away the gift certificate. When people purchase a ticket, have them write down their contact information, including their e-mail address, and use this information to develop a mass e-mail campaign to promote your services after the event. (You should include information on the raffle ticket or signage that would indicate that the information on the raffle ticket would be used for marketing purposes by your company. You should also want to let the event organizer know you are doing this. Not only can they help



**If you do chose to donate your services, the biggest benefit would be the exposure for your business...which could be the best, most cost-effective marketing you can do.**

you with an area to set up for ticket sales, they also may even provide you with a volunteer who can sell the tickets and track the money while you perform!)

The ideas listed above have been successful in maximizing my company's exposure with non-profit organizations. If your DJ company is looking for opportunities to increase your revenue and exposure, hopefully some of the above information can be beneficial when you receive your next call asking about services for a fundraiser or non-profit organization. **MB**

*Rob Peters operates Rob Peters Entertainment, Inc. based in Braintree, Massachusetts. Rob is the author of **The Business of Mobile DJing**, available through ProDJ Publishing, and owns [www.bubbleparties.com](http://www.bubbleparties.com), a website that promotes children's entertainment.*



# Deal...or No Deal?

HOW TO HANDLE DISCOUNTS FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

BY RYAN BURGER •

**Y**ou run a fantastic company that everyone wants to hire for their events...including, of course, your friends and relatives. So how do you handle them when they ask you for a "deal?"

This is a touchy spot that can leave you feeling taken advantage of if you don't view it the right way. I would suggest two categories to help you deal with the question: "Deal, or no deal?" You should be able to look at these kind of "close" potential clients from one of these two perspectives:

1. Immediate "Family:" This includes truly immediate family like brothers and sisters, but also their significant others (brothers/sisters-in-law). And, at this level I also include employees who are like my business "family." What I have done on these occasions is donate the services but I also ask that they pay my DJ employee. The company portion is about a \$400-\$450 gift, much more than anyone else is probably giving the couple, except for maybe the parents, but it works well. I ask that they look at the calendar and, if at all possible, avoid scheduling their event during my busier times with their higher income potential.

2. Everyone Else: I would offer others a deal of maybe \$50 off, which is within my negotiability on almost any contract. I'd steer them to away from a prime date such as a Friday or Sunday and work from there.

Another way to "give" more to the potential friend/relative client is to use "the more bang

for your buck" approach. If they are in category #2 above, I would offer them an extra hour of service, more personal attention on the event ("How about if I take care of you myself instead of my employees doing the event?"), free party props, etc.—anything that isn't money directly out of my pocket. Another angle is to offer a heavier discount on add-on services such as a photo booth or something similar that doesn't require heavy set-up or other labor/expense on your part.

## EXPLAIN YOURSELF

It should be relatively easy for you to come up with "deals" that you are comfortable offering to friends or family. The greater challenge may be explaining your offer to the person who thinks they should get a super deal because they know a DJ.

Remember, this is what you do for a living. If the person works in retail, for instance, they might be able to get you their employee discount of 10%, but they can't just give away their company's income. And in other cases, discounts are

simply not an option. Just because your buddy works for UPS does he give you a discount?

## THE HOBBY PROBLEM

The real problem lies in the unfortunate fact that most people, unless they really know someone in the DJ business, consider what we do to be a hobby. This is because a large segment of your competition is treating it that way. This is the reason why my company never got into karaoke and the bar karaoke market. In the Des Moines, Iowa area where we are based, there are simply too many people who will do a KJ gig at the local bar for \$100 and their drink tab. This DJ thing is a real profession for us, and we express it in everything we do.

Maybe your friends from college remember when you used to think of DJing with a "paid to party" attitude, and they don't know that you now take it seriously, read trade magazines, file taxes for the business instead of pocketing the cash, go to trade shows, and more. (And besides, if they haven't talked to you since college, "way back when," what right do they have to ask for a "friends and family" discount anyway?.)

Fixing this "hobby problem" has been an ongoing challenge for the national DJ associations, but we have a long way to go before people automatically treat DJs as true professionals.

Once you have educated your friend or family member about the reality of your profession, you should be able to strike a deal that is acceptable to all parties. Then, once you have performed a great gig and made their event a success, you're likely to get at least few referrals that result in full-price clients!







## Deal, or No Deal? The Online Buzz

**W**e asked some of our chat board members at Start.MobileBeat.Com to weigh in on the subject of special treatment for family and friends. Here are some responses:

I tend to handle it by offering a small discount—nothing too drastic—and then explain that, because entertaining is my ONLY job, I can't offer up one of my scarce weekend dates for free, nor can I miss my target income for that week if I expect to stay afloat. More often than not, they understand. If not, I say, "What would you do if your boss said that he's not having a good month, and would you come in and work a week for free? Or half-pay?" That usually makes the light bulb come on." - **Stu Chisholm, Stu and His Crew**

I base things like this on my actual relationship with the person. If it's somebody I do a lot of things with and am involved otherwise on a regular basis with...then I would cut them a wider latitude than someone who I never hear from til they need a favor." - **Ken Heath, Start.MobileBeat.Com Moderator**

"I totally agree with Ken to a point. I have quite a large family and a lot of them got me off to the start I got, so I like to pay back to my family and give them a discount. Friends on the other hand could be a best friend when they need something and never talk to you until they need something again so it's a case by case situation. I would say relationship is key to the discount." - **DJ Krim**

"Charge them double. No discounts. Friends and family usually want you to work harder, and want more out of you for nothing than the average customer. It is best to refer your friends/family to another reputable DJ which they have no manipulation over." - **Robert Starkey, Havasu Entertainment**

"No Discounts... in fact, like a lawyer or doctor, I shy away from doing events for friends and family." - **DJ Jeffrey Evan Mufson, Jemstar Entertainment**

For me it all depends on the relationship. Are they really friends or "acquaintances?" Close friends and family, I tell them just pay my guy directly, I'm not taking a dime and the DJ gets cash, so he's happy. Previous clients get our "friends and family rate" We have numerous instances where we've done 3,4 or 5 weddings for a family and we'll adjust accordingly as needed, not to 2000 prices, but we consider the relationship valuable and will make sure they know we appreciate the business. Outside of that, this is my business: I can't give everyone a discount and still make a profit and a living wage. As I've pointed out on sales calls to clients, MY BEST PRICE and "Your best price" are often hundreds of dollars apart. MY BEST PRICE makes me the most money. Your best price means I'm not making what I want to be making. I'm always after MY BEST PRICE. - **Brian Smith**

I agree with Ken on the subject. Level of discount depends on the individual relationship with the family/friend. Usually, I can use the, "I don't want to work, I wanna be a guest!" excuse, then offer to assist them with finding another DJ. This absolves me from being put in the uncomfortable position. - **Lou Silva**

Thankfully I don't have a lot of family asking me to do events...Friends are another situation! If they know this is solely what I do to feed my family and pay my bills, I wonder why they would even ask for a discount in the first place. I can't ask my friend, the mortgage broker, to get me a discounted loan. I can't ask my friend, the car salesman, to give me a car at cost. Well...I could ask, but I realize that is how they feed their families and are often NOT the business owner who can make that decision.

Now, I can ask my friend who does remodeling if we can do a trade-out. Perhaps he can put a new floor in my kitchen and only make me pay for the hard costs (i.e. the wood flooring) and get his services for less if I can do his daughter's wedding for less than my

normal fee. Give and take.

I think too many look at a DJ profession as far from a "real job", and therefore they don't think we should be able to live off our DJ income. How many full-time DJs have ever had someone ask them when they were going to give up this "DJ thing" and get a real job? - **Brian, DJ Busyb**

I'm not entirely successful at it myself, but one thing I have been trying is to somehow insist on some sort of ROI or "horse-trading" if you will, i.e. your cousin is getting married and expects a discount, so you give 'em one. Is it unfair that you ask them to do something in return? Review your marketing, compare your services to others, Use pictures and video from their wedding, try out new things, etc., etc. - **Hippydog**

I've had to tell my friends and family that Saturdays are off-limits for discounts. Not even my mother gets a discount on a Saturday.

I explain that Saturday is THE day. I further explain that there are only 52 a year, with a few of those being hardly-ever-booked Saturdays. For example, the Saturday just before or just after Christmas hardly ever gets booked. I explain that I need those income opportunities to survive.

Now if it's on any other day of the week, I'm more than willing to negotiate. But I make it a rule to never cut my base rate by more than 50%. This is to prevent being taken advantage of. But I will throw in add-ons at no additional charge. - **DJ Wes**

I borrowed the "model" that the leader of the band I hired for my wedding offered me in 2000. This was one of THE best bands in the area at the time, that I referred to many country club members. When it came time for my own wedding, I never asked but the band leader insisted upon showing his appreciation by offering me his deepest discount. He had a 3-tier discount package: Friends, Relatives and Family, with "Family" offering the deepest discount.

I was really impressed by how organized this guy was and how all 6 members of this very popular band were all on board with the discount plan for people in these 3 categories. I resisted, but gratefully accepted his "Family" discount price of \$800 for a normally priced \$3500 to \$4000 band fee. The 3-tier plan is easy to explain and seems to make a lot of sense. A band of course must charge more because of the additional members in the group who need to be paid, who have no client relationship. - **Uncle Mike, Class Act Events. MB**



# Make a Date to Update

SETTING A REGULAR TIME TO REVIEW AND TIGHTEN UP YOUR WEB PRESENCE COULD MEAN MORE DATES BLOCKED OUT ON YOUR CALENDAR

BY JIM WEISZ •

**I**t's no secret that a successful website is always a work in progress. Whether it's adding new pictures or entering testimonials from recent events, you should be updating your website content on a regular basis. In addition to regular website maintenance, you should go through every page on your website at least once a year to update everything.

## THE RIGHT TIME TO UPDATE

When is the right time to go through your website to do a major overhaul? Your best bet is right before your busiest time

of year for new leads, which is probably also your slowest time for performing at events. This is the optimal time because you want it to be most up to date right before you have an influx of visitors. It also allows you time to work out any issues you might run into.

If you are a wedding DJ, I would recommend going through your website during the time between Thanksgiving and Christmas. As every wedding DJ knows, there are a lot of engagements around the holidays. So you want to make sure your website really sparkles when all the new brides are looking for their DJ.

If you're mainly a school DJ, your best time to update your website would be sometime around mid-July to mid-August. Most schools begin planning their homecoming dance right as school starts, and sometimes even before school starts.

So you definitely want to make sure your website update is done at least a week before school starts.

Finally, if you specialize in corporate events, you will want to do your website update around the beginning of August since most companies only have the need to hire a DJ for their holiday party. Some companies will book very early in the year but most will wait until it is closer to the holidays.


## WHAT TO UPDATE

Every DJ website is different, so there's no universal checklist of things that you should update. However, here's a short list of things you should update if they are part of your website:

**Pictures:** Look through all the pictures you've taken, or gotten from photographers, and post the best new pictures. The same goes for video.

**Testimonials:** Throughout the year you should be collecting comments from your clients. So whether you get video testimonials or written testimonials, post your freshest testimonials on your website.

**About Us:** Go through the "About Us" page and add any recent accomplishments or milestones. Also update the number of years your company has been in business and check all other information for accuracy.



**In addition to regular website maintenance, you should go through every page on your website at least once a year to update everything.**



**Spelling/grammar check:** Read through every word on every page of your website. This is a great opportunity to find any errors while also fine tuning the copy on your website.

**Miscellaneous:** Go through your links page to make sure all the links still work, and check all your navigation buttons to make sure there aren't any broken links. Take a look at your meta tags to see if they need to be updated and look at your website in various web browsers to make sure the page looks the way it is supposed to.

## WEBSITE TOOLS

These days, most DJ businesses are using add-on tools on their websites to get interactive with their clients. Using interactive tools is a great way to engage your website visitors; but you need to make sure to update them too. When you are doing your annual website update, that's also a good time to update your website tools. Here are some key items to check:

**Availability checker:** Make sure all your booked dates are blacked out.

**Music search:** Import your most current music database.

**Quote generator:** Verify that the packages match your current offerings. You could also take this opportunity to evaluate your prices/packages to see if you need to make any changes.

**Contract:** If you allow a client to book through your website tools you should make the sure the contract they are printing off is the most current version.

**Auto-responder:** If you use the auto-responder feature, review the auto-response and update it if needed.

**Control panel:** Go through all the features in your control panel to make sure everything is set the way you want it to be set.

## BENEFITS OF YOUR ANNUAL UPDATE

Outside of the annual update, you should, of course, be updating your website on a regular basis. But as everyone knows, the daily grind can keep you from updating your website as often as you should. So, if you have a reminder set on your calendar to update your website at the same time every year, you'll get into a routine. If you do this big update once a year you can feel confident knowing your website is in its best, most current state right before your busiest booking period—which could equate to more business for you throughout the year.

*Jim Weisz has been a DJ since 1999, primarily serving the wedding and school dance markets. Originally from Chicago, where he had a thriving DJ business, he relocated to Dallas in 2003 to take a position with TM Studios (formerly JonesTM & TM Century). Once there, he used the web effectively to re-establish his client base within a just a few months. Jim is also a convention speaker and contributes a more frequent version of this column to MobileBeat.com. He can be reached at [jim@discoverydjs.com](mailto:jim@discoverydjs.com).*



## SITE INSPECTION

For each issue I chose from websites submitted to me for review. If you would like your website to be considered for review in a future issue of Mobile Beat, send an e-mail to [jim@discoverydjs.com](mailto:jim@discoverydjs.com). The website for this issue is:

[www.fhpentertainment.com](http://www.fhpentertainment.com).

### GOOD:

- Nice rotating pictures at the top of the pages.
- Well-written copy.
- Thumbnail pictures with larger pop-ups work well and look good.
- Excellent "About" page. Great picture and information.
- Great call to action with the all-inclusive package for 2010.
- Excellent use of search engine optimization techniques.

### SUGGESTIONS:

At the bottom of your pages you have links that look like Google ads or something similar. I'd recommend dropping them but if you want to keep them make sure when someone clicks on a link it opens in a new window.

**Upgrades page:** Add some text with some information about your upgrades and then post the videos below that.



Francisco Perez, the owner of FHP Entertainment, sent me an e-mail letting me know he designed the site himself. I could tell when looking at it that the site probably wasn't professionally designed, but with that said, it also didn't feel completely homemade. For being created by someone without a design background, it's a good site overall and could just use some work to take it to the next level. Francisco uses some great search engine optimization techniques and has a lot of pictures to go along with well written copy. I'm sure this website does well for him and there wasn't a lot I thought needed to be changed. My only recommendation might be that when he's ready for a new website to have it professionally designed. (Although I'm not sure I would just scrap this one...perhaps use it for another domain?) **MB**





# Presenting a United Front

PROMOTING DJS TO THE PUBLIC: A CHALLENGE FOR ASSOCIATIONS

BY MARK JOHNSON •

**W**hen looking at how associations help DJs it is instructive to compare and contrast the DJ association model with those of other professional groups. I have had extensive experience with professional and trade associations and trade shows through relationships with my computer clients. Also, my extended family works within the conference industry, providing accommodations and professional technical services.

What I have learned about these subsets of the industries that they serve is that they are self-funded and supported. Meaning, no governmental affiliation or liability requires their existence or participation. They are all self-governed and managed and have all existed for quite some time to instill professional guidelines and standards that usually exceed any legal requirements for that industry.

Let's see how this applies to mobile DJs. At present, there are several national DJ associations, as well as many regional chapters or smaller localized groups. All of this is fine and healthy, but we need to explore their functions to see how they can be optimized.

## MAGS, SHOWS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Working with a major publisher client of mine, I've learned that most associations are directly related to a so-called "trade magazines" that are specifically directed towards that industry. The magazines tend to create a business-to-business (B2B) relationship between commercial products and companies that need them. This can grow into an annual buyer's guide that is a composite of that industry's advertisers and products, and may even grow into an annual trade show where the advertisers can demonstrate their wares. Again, the general public is not invited.

Eventually this collective group of readers may band together to create an association with specific requirements to belong. So many professions now have trade associations that today there's a veritable alphabet soup of letter combinations abbreviating them.

(This is an appropriate place to mention the difference between Mobile Beat and a true trade magazine. While MB serves one primary industry, it is not officially connected with any association. And while it does produce trade shows, MB is, technically speaking, a "consumer" magazine, albeit a very narrowly focused one. It is also worth noting that many trade magazines are born as the communication arm of associations.)

## LOOK FOR THE DJ LABEL?

There are two sides to this fence regarding trade associations: What they do internally and what they do externally. Internally, they can create standards for participation, levels of professional certification, requirements for advancement, peer recognition and other actions to advance the association, its members and their industry in general. It's not just a coffee club monthly meeting to brag about accomplishments and share war stories.

External activity is another story and possibly more limited. The most important element is that a trade group can be called upon to promote the value of their members to the general public. This is no easy task and can get really expensive.

I'm reminded of one example of this third-party promotion by an advertisement campaign years ago. In it, the Ladies Garment Workers Union created the phrase "Look for the Union Label" and advised the general public to look at the tags on new clothing to see if the LGWU had produced the garments. If it wasn't there, then the implication was that the garment was of inferior quality. So the trade association, having many members, spent large amounts of promotional money acquired from the members to promote the membership.

Let's see how this plays with mobile DJs. I doubt that any of the DJ associations have the money for ads directed at the general public to "look for the pro DJ label." This is mainly because of their limited membership in comparison to a large trade union with thousands of members paying weekly dues to support the union.

## CARD-CARRYING ENTERTAINERS

But I wonder how it plays with the general public. When speaking with a prospect, a DJ can mention that they belong to XYZDJ Association and the prospect's response may be "XYZ-who?" So the DJ is spending a few minutes starting from zero to inform the prospect about the elevated status the DJ has by belonging to a professional association.

Nothing would please the DJ associations more than to have the general public ask prospective DJs if they belong to a particular association. DJs who don't belong, and who get these phone calls from prospects, will seek to become members.

Is it fair to ask the DJ associations to promote the value of membership to the general public? Or perhaps there is enough promotional value in the one-on-one conversation between the member DJ and the uninformed prospect. In either case, it's a daunting task to get the word out to the general public to "look for the pro DJ label." **MB**



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# Dammit, Jim—I'm a DJ, Not a...

PUTTING ADD-ONS IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE

BY STU CHISHOLM •

**“It sure is a lot of hassle for a really small paycheck.” That was what a friend of mine said back in the ‘80s when I asked him about all of the books of wedding invitations he had in his office.**

That was the first add-on I can recall DJs offering their clients, aside from lighting, but I took a pass. I was focused on my show and keeping my calendar full, as most DJs were. When karaoke came along, it was billed as “the next big thing.” It never did live up to the hype, but many companies have incorporated it nonetheless, and it has become a familiar item on mobile DJs’ lists of services. Again, I took a pass. I remember being surprised when I found out that another colleague had incorporated photography and videography into his arsenal. In fact, it gave me a weird sense of déjà vu.

During my first year in college, I was a photographer on the yearbook staff. I’d shoot weddings on the side to help keep myself in dates and pizzas. I’ve always liked photography, even back when it involved being in a cramped darkroom with stinky chemicals, yet it wasn’t what I ultimately wanted to do. After college, I met my wife, who was a television broadcasting student at Central Michigan University. By then I was running my mobile DJ business and interning at a local radio station, but I also took several local access classes and racked-up some hours running cameras and doing some editing. It was a lot of fun and, oddly enough, video jobs turned out to be all I could find! Detroit radio is almost legendary when it comes to competition for jobs and I wasn’t about to move, so when my mobile DJ company began to take off, I ditched the video stuff to focus on my events. Yet now here was my friend, shooting and videotaping the wedding along with entertaining.

A few companies in my area have tried to become a “one-stop shopping center” for weddings receptions, with differing levels of success. Most are gone now.

## BACK TO THE FUTURE

Around 2007, with the economy in a shambles and the DJ industry feeling the impact, I began to brainstorm different ways to improve my bottom line. All of those old ideas had made a serious comeback, and DJs in my area routinely offered karaoke, photography and videography. But another revolution was also underway. For years, specialty companies had been hired to come in and decorate a venue, sometimes using what is known as “uplighting”—spotlights and other effects employed to “paint” the room with light. DJs took this idea and ran with it, helped along by the advent of bright, inexpensive LED lighting. By tying in uplighting to the DJ’s light show, the concept became to extend the action far beyond the dance floor, involving the whole room. It’s an impressive effect, but has the disadvantage of requiring a DJ to carry a lot more gear and spend a lot more time setting it all up.

Still, the idea of adding more and more items and services had taken root, and it’s been an endless parade of options ever since: video projectors, tattoo stations, photo booths, games and game show gear, and on and on.

When I wrote my book, *The Complete Disc Jockey*, my focus was twofold: to keep DJs who need to take on a day job stay in the field, and to help them maintain a healthy level of income during a recession. I included all of the ideas above and then some. In tough times, my fellow mobile entertainers needed a lifeline!

## DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

You can imagine how I felt, then, speaking to the members of my local ADJA chapter and reading the many online postings of friends and colleagues, who were all talking about the same things. There seems to be a “follow-the-leader” mentality, that confuses clients, and once again making DJ companies appear homogenous. This was confirmed during a recent client meeting. As we were wrapping up and they were signing my contract, the bride said, “We’ve been looking for the true professionals who specialize in just one thing and do it well. All the other DJs we’ve talked to wanted to sell us all kinds of stuff!”

## ON THE CUTTING EDGE...BY CUTTING BACK?

After that meeting, I couldn’t help but ask myself some questions. What did I get into this business for? Do I want to be a KJ? A VJ? A lighting technician? Can I impress with my style, personality and some music, or do I need to impress with massive gear? And isn’t the former supposed to augment the latter, rather than bury it?

So let me wrap this one up by saying that, if a struggling DJ company really needs to improve their bottom line quickly, then value added items and additional services might be a necessary addition, at least in the short term. However, for long-term success and stability, we can take another lesson, this time from Ford Motor Company: Offer a great product and you’ll always have clientele. Never lose sight of the fact that the only thing your competition can’t buy for their service is YOU. Be your best...and then work to get even better!

Until next time, safe spinnin’! **MB**



*Stu Chisholm, a mobile DJ in the Detroit area since 1979, has also been a nightclub DJ, done some radio, some commercial voice-over work and has even worked a roller skating rink! Stu attended the famous Specs Howard School of Broadcasting and has been a music collector since the age of seven. Stu’s guide to the profession, *The Complete DJ*, was recently released by ProDJ Publishing.*



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